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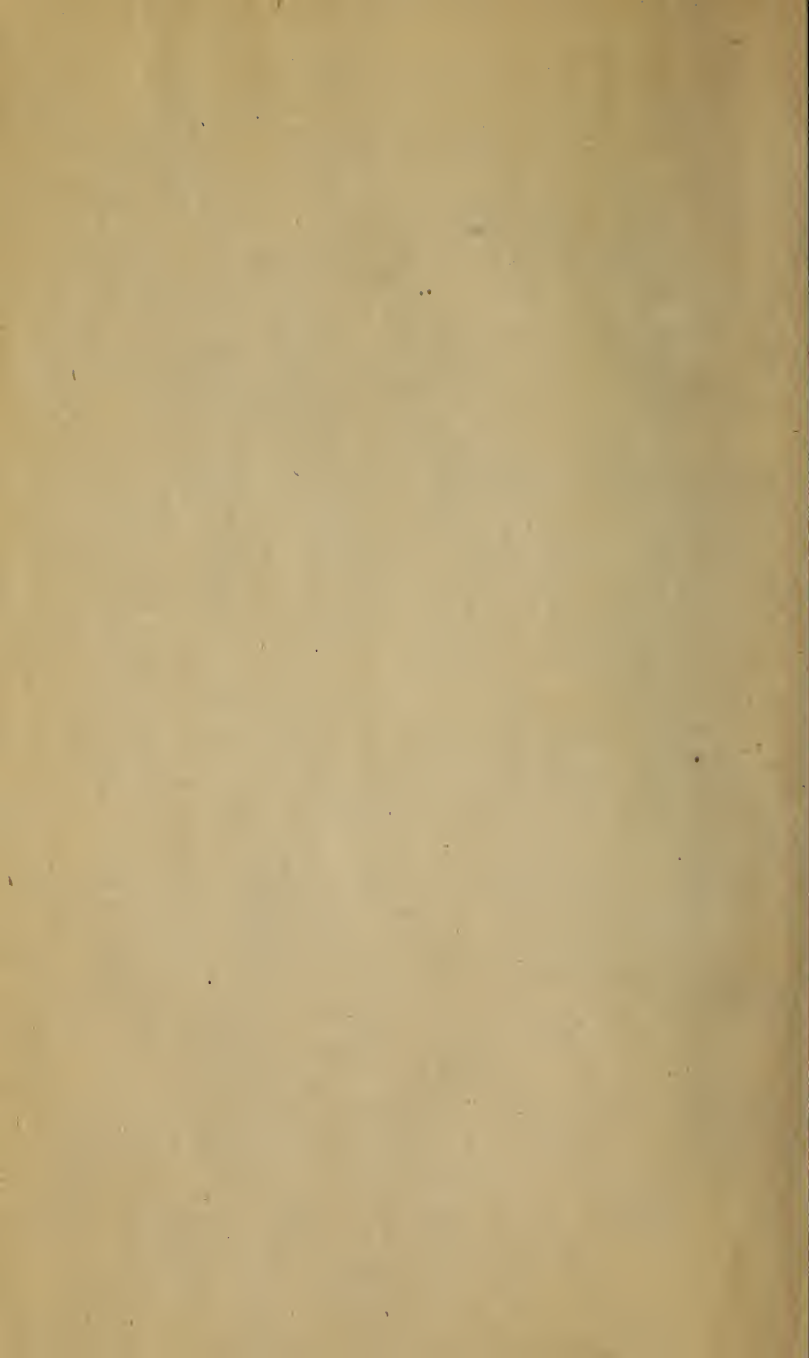
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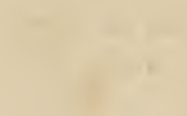
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REVUE

DES SCIENCES



1842

7
LEGION,

OR

FEIGNED EXCUSES.

"For they are Many."

George Armstrong Leakin

BY THE AUTHOR OF

17 "A LETTER TO A MEMBER OF A CHURCH CHOIR."

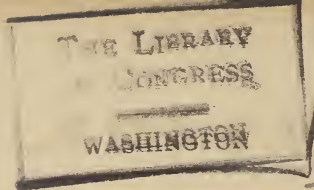
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TO
The Baltimore City Mission,
AND TO
ALL ENGAGED IN EXTENDING THE REDEEMER'S KINGDOM,
THIS WORK
IS
DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR,
WITH THE HOPE THAT THEY MAY HAVE FRIENDS AS NUMEROUS AND
ACTIVE AS LEGION.

[The principal contents of the present work first appeared in "The Church Journal." Shortly after their publication, the author was requested to furnish them in a more durable form; and, in so arranging the work, he has taken the opportunity of adding some illustrations of the original matter, besides arresting a few more of Legion's numerous kindred. There is doubtless much yet to be done in this line; for, with the change of times we may expect a variation in "Feigned Excuses," but such as the author has collected he gives to the public, with the earnest wish that the publication may be of some service to those who, engaged in "doing good," are suffering the inevitable penalty of discouragement, opposition, and neglect.]

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INTRODUCTION.

It is the observation of the learned Bishop Horne, that "Much time and labor are frequently lost in proving what all the hearers allow, as for example, the obligation they are under to do their duty, instead of showing and exposing the various modes of self-deceit by which they contrive to elude the obligation, and live in contradiction to their principles. Pleas and pretences of this sort should be collected, stated, and answered in a close and lively manner, till the hypocrite is completely unmasked, driven out of his strongholds, and compelled to surrender at discretion."

The author of this little book, fully agreeing with the Bishop, is satisfied that the awful neglect of religious obligations does not result from direct intention, but from a wonderful art in palming upon ourselves excuses, which at first may seem valid, but on closer inspection are found delusive. And that this is the Church's sentiment may be seen in this exhortation to the Holy Communion:—"It is an easy matter for a man to say, I will not communicate because I am otherwise hindered with worldly business. But such excuses are not so easily accepted and allowed before God. If any man say I am a grievous sinner, and therefore am afraid to come! Wherefore, then, do ye not repent and

amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse yourselves and say ye are not ready? Consider earnestly with yourselves how little such feigned excuses will avail before God. Those who refused the feast in the Gospel, because they had bought a farm or would try their yokes of oxen, or because they were married, were not so excused, but counted unworthy of the heavenly feast."

It should, however, be borne in mind, that while the Church here specifies the Holy Communion, we are not to infer that self-deception is confined to that sacrament, for there is no command of God that is not evaded in the very same way. Nor must we suppose that these excuses of "farm," "oxen," "wife," were the only ones the Saviour meant. He doubtless selected these as heads, or specimens of a herd whose name is "*Legion*," and whose agency is as active now as when He cast the evil spirits into the swine. The minister of Christ is especially sensible of influential excuses which render ineffectual the closest sermon, which drown the voice of conscience, and make their victim deaf to the warnings of a coming judgment. Hundreds of men and women there are in nearly every congregation who will submit to no deception in their temporal affairs, but who, in the more important concern of their soul's salvation, take up with the merest excuses, treat fables as Gospel, and Gospel as fables, wrap themselves up in a fancied security, unaffected by the severest afflictions, unalarmed by the realities of a death-bed. Indeed we are informed that such excuses survive this life, and retain their hold even at the scrutiny of God's Judgment; for one will boldly assert that

he had carefully put away his Lord's talent that it might not be lost, and another will say, "Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and done many wondrous works." But then the veil must fall from the false prophet, for to the first Christ will say, "Thou wicked and slothful servant;" and to the second, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity." The various excuses by which men succeed in destroying their souls, saying "peace! peace! when there is no peace," cannot be numbered; perhaps each individual has some one excuse peculiar to himself. But there are some prominent ones familiar to those examining this subject, which are the heads of numerous subdivisions, and as such may well be called *LEGION*. It is, of course, not meant that such excuses are evil spirits, except in a figurative way of speaking, but there is no doubt that Satan frequently suggests them to the mind; for if—as we read in Holy Scripture—he comes and takes from the inattentive heart the good seed sown there, it is easy to see, that where such seed *has* taken root, he will use every means to destroy its productiveness; and this he will do most successfully, not by urging direct opposition to the truth, but indirectly counteracting its influence, by satisfying a person, that though he is not doing what God requires, he has very good reasons for *not* doing so. "In the day thou eatest thou shalt *not* die." And the more satisfactory those reasons are, the more secure is the victim, especially if he can be persuaded, with Adam and Balaam, that "God has kept him back from good." Indeed this very case of Balaam should warn all to examine themselves, to pray with the Psalmist, to be "kept from secret faults," by which is meant, not faults secret to

others, but through self-deception to ourselves, and to satisfy not only the eyes of neighbors, but His "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid."

The reminding others of faults to which they have been insensible is by no means pleasant, for it gives pain; but he who, to correct faults would spare that pain, will be as unsuccessful as the physician who would cure some deep-seated disease while the patient is asleep. And although recent discoveries in medicine may perhaps lead to this result, nothing of the kind can be attempted in morals; for, here the very disease is insensibility, and the cure consists in rousing the patient from the delusive dreams of imagination to the realities of duty. It is for this purpose this book has been written. The writer has, with great difficulty, succeeded in arresting many excuses, and in bringing them out of their lurking-places. He has further succeeded in having them BOUND TOGETHER, so that they may leisurely be examined, one by one. Or, to change the figure slightly, he has tried to construct a true mirror, by which characters may be better known: and he would request the reader, if he should see himself there, not to throw down the mirror as false, but to change himself, so that the next look may be more agreeable. In this way a little book may be of great service, as it may introduce a person to a stranger he should have known long since,—*himself*, and thus correct deficiencies which, though unseen, are still ruinous to the soul.

"Let upright men reprove my faults,
And I shall think them kind;
Like healing oil upon my head,
I their reproof shall find."

Legion,

OR

FEIGNED EXCUSES.

"FOR THEY ARE MANY."

I.

"I HAVE NO TIME: MY BUSINESS TAKES EVERY SPARE MOMENT."—And this is your excuse for neglecting repentance, and thus you will live, and thus *die*. But a word with you, my friend. Do you not take time to refresh the body with sleep and food, and shall you not attend to the wants of your immortal soul? Could you not spare half an hour daily from your business for your devotion, or could you not, without disturbing your business, rise earlier, and so gain the requisite time? The busiest man, as Lord Brougham, has been able to accomplish great and numerous results by saving merely fragments of time, as goldsmiths save the filings of precious metals: and could not you do the same? And where is your Sunday, the day that was given expressly for devotion, and which, properly improved, would save the soul? How can you say you have no time, when fifty-two Sundays every year close your place of business and invite you to God's house of prayer? But you mean that you devote *Sundays also* to the cares of business, the writing of

letters, the examination of accounts, and thus, truly, you have no time, but the reason is, you kill it, and you deceive yourself with an excuse. God has given you abundant opportunity for repentance. Your business cannot be so engrossing as Daniel's, who, with the superintendence of a kingdom, found time to return to his chamber and worship God three times a day. No; you do not really *wish* to repent, and then you lay the blame upon the want of time. However, after death you will not be so troubled with these busy cares, and you will have ample time for repentance, but then it will be too late.

Each moment of time is so valuable that God never gives us one until the previous one is taken away; of them, differing from all His other gifts, there can be no accumulation. They are our spare moments, which by proper use accomplish life's great object. The excellent Robert Boyle well remarks:—"As though grains of sand and ashes be but of despicable smallness and very easy to be blown away, yet the skilful artificer by a vehement fire brings numbers of these to make him that noble substance, glass; by whose help we may see ourselves and our blemishes represented, as in a looking-glass; discern heavenly objects, as with a telescope; or with sunbeams kindle, as with burning-glasses; so when these little fragments of time, which if not carefully looked to would be lost, are managed by a skilful Christian and improved by the fire of devotion, they may afford us looking-glasses to dress our souls by, and perspectives to discover heavenly wonders, and incentives to inflame our hearts with charity and zeal."

While Philip De Neri was living in an Italian university, a young man ran to him with a face full of delight, and told him that he had come to the law-school of that place on account of its great fame, and that he intended to spare no pains or labor to get through his studies as soon as possible. Philip waited for his conclusion with great patience, and then

said:—"Well, and when you have got through your course of studies what do you mean to do?"

"Then I shall take my Doctor's degree," answered the young man.

"And then?" asked Philip again.

"And then," continued the youth, "I shall have a number of difficult questions to manage, shall catch people's notice by my eloquence, my zeal, my learning, my acuteness, and gain a great reputation."

"And then?" repeated the holy man.

"And then," replied the youth, "why there can't be a question I shall be promoted to some high office or other; besides, I shall make money and grow rich."

"And then?" repeated Philip.

"And then," pursued the young lawyer, "then I shall live comfortably and honorably in health and dignity."

"And then?" asked the holy man.

"And then," said the youth . . . "and then . . . and then . . . then I shall die."

Here St. Philip raised his voice,—"*AND WHAT THEN?*" Whereupon the young man made no answer, but cast down his head and went away. The last "*And then*" had like lightning pierced his soul, and he could not get rid of it. Soon after he forsook the law, and gave himself to the ministry of Christ, and spent the remainder of his days in godly words and works. "*Your business,*" reader, "*takes every spare moment.*" *And what then?*

II.

"*BUT I HAVE TRIED, AND FOUND MY EXERTIONS VAIN.*"—Then you could not have sought the proper object, or not in the right way, for all who have really tried to repent know that God "*never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain.*" You sought, but what kind of seeking? Was it with

the whole heart? If not, you did not seek Him aright, for He assures us that then we "shall find Him when we seek Him with the whole heart." Half-heartedness accomplishes nothing important, and you might have expected a failure. Perhaps under some plain sermon or distressing affliction your thoughts turned towards Heaven. You prayed in Church and in private, but you did not incorporate these prayers into action, or the reformation which you made was in your own strength exclusively. You tried, just as men go about some unpleasant duty, and not as those who dig for silver. No, you have not tried, or you would have been successful. The fault has been in yourself, not in God. And if you will try earnestly, and repeatedly, you shall resemble the prophet, who, though no cloud arose for six prayers, was answered in the seventh; or her whose, prayers for mercy were delayed only to bring down a richer blessing on her faith. Persevere and you shall succeed.

III.

"GOD IS MERCIFUL."—He is, indeed, so much so "that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But this mercy is for sinners who repent; there is none for continued impenitence, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." It was sin that caused a merciful God to expel Angels from Heaven, Adam from Paradise, and that plunged the sword of justice into the bosom of the Saviour. And it is sin which at the judgment day will drive the impenitent to outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Were a governor to proclaim pardon to criminals on their ceasing from crime, what malignity of character would they exhibit if they made the governor's clemency an excuse for continuing their wicked doings? So, to continue in sin on the

plea that God is merciful, is adding insult to previous injury. It is drawing on his mercy in a way He does not authorize, and it is a self-deception which will *some* day be discovered. Yes, God *is* merciful, but beware of mercy's anger—the wrath of the Lamb!

IV.

“I AM NO WORSE THAN OTHERS.”—Probably not; but then you owe a debt of gratitude to Him who has so kept you from *falling* into those sins which are ruining others; and how do you pay this debt? By disobeying Him who thus preserved you, and by telling Him that you are “no worse than others?” But what do you mean by saying that you are no worse than others? That you have numbers on your side? Then you have not read that “though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.” You have forgotten that God destroyed a world of impenitents, saving one righteous family, and that God’s word plainly warns us “not to follow a multitude to do evil.” If you are no worse than others, you certainly will not be punished more than they; but what mitigation to individual pain is it, that others experience more? You *are*, however, worse than others, for there are many, leading “sober, righteous and godly lives,” who compare their conduct with God’s unerring law, not with the opinions and practices of others; who show their gratitude for God’s mercies not only with their lips, but in their lives: while *you*,—trampling under foot those same mercies,—extenuate your conduct by a mere excuse. By continuing in your present disposition, you provoke God to withdraw His restraining grace, and then, like Hazael, you may sink below those others who are your present standard.

So far from being *worse*, you may indeed be *better*, than others. You may even thank God that you are not as this neighbor, and yet justifying yourself you may be condemned by your all-seeing Judge.

V.

"I INTEND TO REPENT."—And thus is substituted intention for the act—a very allowable thing when the act cannot be performed, but a mockery of God when it can. But you may not have time to repent; for, in a week, time may be no more with you; or, if you *have* time, you may not have the intention, for intentions die when not carried into effect; or you may not have God's aid, for "when he called, you refused." But you are deceiving yourself. You do not intend to repent. You are as the intemperate man who intends to reform after further indulgence in his vice; or, as a dishonest man, who intends to be honest after further thefts. If you really intended, you would begin now, for now is God's accepted time. You would be warned by Felix, who tried the more convenient season, to his eternal ruin.

Intention or resolution is but an imperfect act, a term of relation, and signifies nothing but in order to its actions; it is as a faculty to the act—as spring to the harvest—as eggs are to birds—as a relative to a correspondent:—nothing without it. No man therefore can be in a state of grace and actual favor by resolutions and holy purposes. These are but the gates and portals towards pardon; a holy life is the only perfection of repentance, and the firm ground upon which we can cast the anchor of "hope in the mercies of God through Jesus Christ."

VI.

"I AM NO HYPOCRITE."—Which, doubtless, you suppose is a very meritorious assertion. You mean, that, to be sure, you are guilty of *some* sins, but perfectly innocent of hypocrisy; and your innocence in this respect is to atone for many delinquencies. But where did you learn that hypocrisy was

the crowning sin of all, and so much worse than disobedience or covetousness? Not certainly in God's Word, which requires repentance not for one, but all sins. But supposing you *are* no hypocrite; that is, that you do not deceive your fellow men, you are evidently deceiving *yourself* in your impenitency, and it is difficult to see what right a person has to deceive himself more than to deceive others. Indeed, this self-deception is hypocrisy just as self-killing is murder. And then, again, as you imply that some whom you know are hypocrites, may you not be as much mistaken in the estimate of their character as you are of your own; at least one should be cautious how in a single breath he acquits himself and condemns others. However, your being no hypocrite, no more excuses you, than your hypocritical friends being no slanderers, excuses them.

VII.

"IT IS SO HARD TO REPENT"—and with this view of repentance, God is regarded as a hard master, and his service a toilsome drudgery; but it can be shown that He requires of us nothing but for our good, and for this end ordains labor as necessary to our moral health, for both morally and physically we "must earn our bread by the sweat of the brow." If the difficulties of religion were *beyond* human capacity, there would be reason in the excuse; but God puts no more upon us than we are able to bear, and no more than is necessary to exercise our good, and mortify our evil dispositions; and without such spiritual labor goodness must die. The difficulties of religion show its value, for could it be obtained without exertion, we should esteem it as the dust of the ground. Gold is sought for, diligently; and is valued because thus sought; and it is this seeking diligently for God's favor which makes us appreciate it when found, for

“As her holy labors rise,
So her rewards increase.”

It is indeed hard to repent without continued exertion, and it is also hard when we rely on our own strength; but repentance is practicable when God's aid is sought by earnest prayer united to our own efforts. In such case the imaginary difficulties vanish as mist before the sun, and the *real* ones diminish. It is your continued impenitence that makes it hard to return, and the longer continued, the more difficult will it become, for habits which might be broken now, in a year will become inveterate. No: the difficulty is in *yourself*. You say, “there is a lion in the way,” but the wise man assures us that it is the *slothful* man says so. Shake off sloth, and you are rid of a most formidable enemy.

And it is very questionable whether this excuse of “so hard” will endure your own scrutiny. You do not repent because it is beyond your efforts; in a year it will be still more impracticable. One would suppose, if you really found such difficulty now, you would not allow time to add anything further to this difficulty, but would immediately employ extraordinary energy. The alternative “now or never” would stimulate to *present* work. Nor can you believe that repentance now is impracticable, for this belief would cause a state of mind which would prevent your reading this volume. You would need some opiate for despair, not some excitement for insensibility.

VIII.

“I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT.”—Then I infer that you do not intend to believe or do *anything* unless you understand it. If so, to be consistent, you should learn nothing, do nothing, for all that you should most value contains mysteries above the highest comprehension. Newton, with all his

learning, spoke of his attainments as the picking up of pebbles on the beach of science ;—the ocean was yet unexplored. Indeed, if you have maintained such a principle early in life, you could not now be reading this book, because, previous to your learning anything, it could not now nor at any future time, be understood, unless the requisite application be given. The more one advances, the more sensible is he of his ignorance, and the less inclined to boast. What ineffable folly, then, to make obedience depend on your understanding the nature of God,—which is as high above us as heaven is above earth ; far higher than we are above the worm that crawls beneath our feet.

But you do not understand the Scriptures ; you find some contradictions there. Then you *have* read the Scriptures : but how have you read them ? to learn the truth or to find fault ? If the latter, you have brought to the investigation an evil eye, which would discover a beam in purity itself. The Bible has apparent contradictions, just as the book of nature ; and as the latter requires a patient study of Astronomy, and Chemistry, to render page harmonious with page, so the former requires a docile, humble, childlike disposition ; and with *this*, apparent contradictions illustrate God's wisdom and man's folly. The Bible itself declares who shall understand it : " Those that do the will of God shall know of the doctrine : " " Them that are meek will He guide in judgment. " A rebel is not likely to understand the principles of the government he is trying to destroy : his aim is to find defects, not excellencies. No ; the difficulty is not in understanding the Bible ; for were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to say precisely the same thing, then the objection would be that their story was made up, and that their narratives lacked the evidence of correctness, " substantial truth under circumstantial variety. " But the difficulty is this, not understanding *yourself*. From that study you turn your attention, in order to find fault with God's Word. Look more inward,

and you will see sin, and then God's Word will show you pardon. Make the investigation now. It must be made *some* time. The mysteries of God's Word and Providence are mercifully beyond our understanding, as they keep in activity the faithful study of the greatest saint. But this merciful provision is thwarted, and you are persuaded by the tempter to insist on being "as gods," and for this purpose to do what He has forbidden.

Let those who cannot understand the Bible hear the testimony of the learned Bishop Horsley: "It is incredible to any one who has not made the experiment, what proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by studying the Scriptures by parallel passages, without any other commentary or exposition than what the different parts of the Sacred Volume mutually furnish for each other. Let the most unlearned Christian study in this manner; let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated, and no argument of the perverse will of man shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith."

The foregoing excuses, with many others, are made whenever the duty of repentance is enjoined. In order to repent, however, the use of certain ORDINANCES is enjoined, which are not only means of grace but tests of character, and the last was probably the principal design of their appointment: for, men being so apt to delude themselves as to their condition, judged by itself or compared with other men's, God has left certain outward commands by which we may judge of our internal state—commands as obligatory as any of the Ten, deriving, as they do, their authority from the Lawgiver, independent of any benefit in the law itself; but although these ordinances are both a means and a test of repentance, their

force is evaded with amazing art, and numbers neglect the plainest requirements of the Gospel, as though its sound had never reached their ears; thus they live and thus they die, — a deceived heart turning them aside, so that they never seriously ask themselves, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

IX.

“I CAN READ MY BIBLE AT HOME.”—Then you have cause for gratitude that you *can* read and that you *have* the Bible, of both of which privileges thousands are deprived, and you should express your gratitude by keeping all God’s ordinances. But by your excuse, you mean that you purpose not to go to church, because you can read the Bible at home. You *can*, but *do* you read it? No! for it would be strange to see one not taking pleasure in public worship, yet delighting to read the Bible that enjoins that worship. To stay at home when opportunity is afforded for public worship, is in direct opposition to the Apostle’s direction, “not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is;” and if *they* were not to neglect it, when persecution raged against the Christian assemblies, how can you omit it, who have none to molest you? To read the Bible at home instead of assembling for worship, would destroy the Church, which can be known to the world, only by the visible acts of its members. Then we could not know that Christ has any friends, or who they are. Let the members of any other society make the experiment of neglecting the times of meeting, on the plea that they can read its constitution and history at *home*, and soon they would have no society to neglect. No! You can, indeed, read the Bible at home, but you do not, and will not, so long as, with such an excuse, you break the Lord’s Day.

X.

"GOING TO CHURCH WILL SAVE NO ONE."—But who said that by itself it would? You are fighting with your own shadow. Going to church is an important duty, as many others; but the performance of one duty, as church-going, will not compensate for the neglect of others. It is a means of grace: not grace itself. It places a person in the way of salvation, where he will learn what further is to be done, and the mode of doing it. Food will not of itself preserve life, therefore, according to your principles, you should not eat.

Public worship will not, indeed, save any one, as the lives of too many persons prove; but wilful absence from church, unrepented of, will destroy you: because it violates a command of God, and closes a channel of that grace which is indispensable to salvation. The very abuse shows that there is a proper use.

XI.

"I CANNOT AFFORD TO GO."—That is, the renting of a seat, or the payment of a subscription, costs too much. Perhaps, such is the case; and their doubtless is, in some of our churches, a want of provision for those who can pay nothing. This much is readily granted; but this excuse often implies that while, in *our* churches there is a tax, in *other* places of worship there is nothing to pay—membership being had without money or price. But this is a great mistake: for all churches must be supported in one way or an other. The payment may seem smaller when made each week or month, but in a year the total amount is very much as with us; sometimes indeed much greater. You do not wish to imitate that man, who, boasting of his Church's superiority, said, that "though he had been an attendant for thirty years, it had

never cost him a cent"—forgetting that others paid *for* him by additional assessment. But can you not afford it? Is there no indulgence of a pernicious practice which might be left off? No moderation in dress, furniture, table, or amusements, which might be practised? Can no conceivable economy save a small amount for the Lord's treasury? Not even two mites? Have you ever tried the abstinence in Lent enjoined by the Church, and appropriated the savings of that season to the Church? These alone, in a family, would enable you to afford the necessary rent or subscription. No! there are many who will undergo privation for some future self-indulgence: but for the Church, will not surrender a single gratification, curtail a single extravagance, or abstain from things which are lawful. Many could afford it if they would, but the will is wanting: and *you* probably begrudge the Church the fair assessment necessary for the Church's merest wants, and are profuse in your opinions as to churches, costing so much, and the Gospel's being preached without charge. But you are deceiving yourself, and not Him who says, "Will a man rob God? but ye have robbed Me;" and when, in your self-delusion, you ask, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" He replies, "In tithes and offerings." You cannot contribute to His Church, and "inasmuch as ye have not done it to her, ye have not done it to Him" who bought you with His blood.

XII.

"I LIKE TO SEE MY FAMILY AT CHURCH."—And why not like to see *yourself* there? "Church is the place for *them*," and you accordingly pass your Sundays in idleness, paying visits, examining accounts, taking walks; and the church consequently is filled with females, while very few men are to be seen. How is this? Were the Commandments given to females alone? are men exempted from remembering the

Sabbath Day to keep it holy? are men so much better than their wives, sisters, and children, that they do not require to know their duty and be assisted in its performance? Or are they generally so impenitent as to be beyond recovery? What is the cause? But a gleam of hope appears; they like to see their *family* at church. Is this really so? like to see others dearest to you do that which you will not? This can hardly be. What do your actions say? for they, to those around you, speak louder than words. Why, plainly, that you do *not* like to see them at church. You may not oppose it; but it is a matter of perfect indifference, and hence you must not be surprised if what you do has more influence than what you say, and that, in a short time, your family will like to see *other* families going to church, but, like yourself, will not go themselves. "Like to see them go," *indeed!* when you are taking the most successful plan you can to change your church into a warehouse, and Sunday into Monday!

XIII.

"MY HUSBAND WILL NOT ACCOMPANY ME TO CHURCH."—And why not? Perhaps you have not tried to induce him, or perhaps, seeing that your temper has been so little improved by church attendance, he does not deem it necessary. But admitting that you have tried, and that you are married to one "who cares for none of these things," what then? Must you also follow his example and stay from worship for weeks? Desirable as it is to have company, and particularly that of a husband, your duty to keep the Sabbath holy is clear. If he will be lost, it is not necessary that you share that calamity: on the contrary, there is greater need of watchfulness against his unhappy influence. Should he even throw obstacles in the way, it is your duty to remove them, for though a wife should obey, that obedience ceases if it

cause her to disobey her God; for God's laws are superior to all others, marriage itself deriving its authority from Him. It is usual to lay the blame of our deficiencies on others, and to say, "the woman or man whom thou gavest me, did tempt me to eat," but such excuses are not allowed before God. Your situation is doubtless trying, but God's grace will enable you to bear it, and an important means of receiving that grace is—attending divine worship.

Some wives suppose that by yielding in this respect, they may at length persuade their husbands to attend; but the result is just the contrary, for, the wife yielding a principle *once*, her next step is more easy, and the husband, seeing her violate conscience *once*, is more emboldened. Whereas, had she been firm, and shown by her temper, not that she loved her husband less, but loved her God more, he would have respected her more, and perhaps been won over by her conversation. As regards domestic peace alone, a wife stands greatly in her own light who either neglects church herself, or, attending it, does not influence her husband to attend with her: for without patience to meet the crosses that daily arise, there can be no permanent peace. And there can be no such peace in a family, unless it come from Him "who is the author of peace and lover of concord."

It is so rare for a husband not to attend because a wife will not, that it is not necessary to consider such a thing; only, if Lot's wife choose to turn to a pillar of salt, Lot must avoid her sad fate by fleeing to the mountains.

XIV.

"I CANNOT LEAVE MY CHILDREN."—Certainly, children should not be left alone,—particularly an infant. But is there no mode of removing this difficulty? Could not the father take care of them, while the mother is at church

for an hour or two, and he, in his turn, have an opportunity of going? Is there no elder sister, no aunt, no grandmother, no female friend, who has the Christian charity to send the mother to church?—no relatives! Why, what do relatives avail? She cannot get any assistance, and *of course* she never gets to market, to the store, to the Society; but stay! she does occasionally go to these latter places, and the reason of the difference is this:—to go out on week days there is a will and a way, but to attend church there is no will, and consequently no way. No! the mother has allowed her child to become an idol, and hence she thinks it will die if she should leave it for church. She may say her creed, but she does *not* “believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,” for, if she did believe it, she would occasionally trust His providence.

It is melancholy to see females, diligent Christians before marriage, spiritually insensible afterwards. On becoming mothers, they should be more grateful to God, and require more grace to meet their increased responsibility; but frequently they are less grateful, and less sensible of their need of grace; both which are the result of long indulged absence from worship. The mother of an infant may not be able to attend regularly, but to stay away altogether for months is a great mistake, changing, as it does, the intended blessing of the marriage relation into a curse.

XV.

“I DID NOT FEEL VERY WELL.”—On hearing which, one cannot avoid remarking the frequency of headaches on Sunday. On Monday and Saturday many are cheerful and busy, but on Sunday, the attack prostrates them, and they do not feel well enough for church. It might seem, indeed, as if some seventh day epidemic had broken out, and that God,

instead of blessing the Sabbath, had actually cursed it. What can be the cause? Perhaps you do not retire until exhausted by the late work of Saturday night. If so, the remedy is simple: make preparation, as the Jews did, by retiring *earlier*, and then nature, having rest, will not complain. Or perhaps you do nothing on Sunday, and the inactive mind, preying on itself, produces depression of spirits. But while the Sabbath is rest from business cares, it is not rest from devotion: and if you would go to church, joining there with your friends in prayer and praise; if you would teach a class, catechise your children or servants, or call on some sick or poor member of the congregation, Sundays would be found as healthy to body and soul as Mondays.

ALARMING COMPLAINT.—There is a disease at this time but too prevalent, an account of which is not to be found in our popular books of medicine; I shall, therefore, endeavor to communicate some particulars respecting it. The disease to which I refer is evidently of the intermitting kind; and in all cases that have fallen under my notice, has attacked the patient with violent paroxysms, which return every seventh day. It may be thought to savor of superstition to mention it, and yet it is a fact, and therefore must not be passed over, that these paroxysms return only on the Lord's day, on which account the disease is called the Sunday sickness; and the faculty know it by no other name than "*Diei Dominici Morbus*." On account of its periodical attacks, some have thought it to be a kind of ague, as it is attended with a degree of coldness; though I do not perceive the symptoms of shivering which are usual in that complaint.

I have observed the paroxysms commence at different periods; but generally in the morning of the Lord's day, and in many cases they seize the patient before he has left his bed, and make him indisposed to rise till a later hour than usual. A coldness has first been noticed about the region of the heart, and a dullness of the head, which stupifies the brain,

not unusually succeeds; this is followed by a yawning and kind of lethargy. The patient is sometimes deprived of the use of his limbs, especially the legs and feet, so that he feels himself indisposed to walk to the house of God. Some patients have gone to the solemn assembly, but they have generally entered it later than their neighbors; and even there the paroxysms have seized them, and the symptoms of yawning and lethargy have been so violent, that they have fallen into a deep sleep, even when the preacher has been delivering the most solemn truths; and others have been extremely uneasy in their confinement during the short time of service, though they have been known to sit very contented in a playhouse for several hours together. This disease appears to stupify those who are subject to it, so that however they may appear to suffer, they are seldom, if ever, heard to complain. I have known many persons under other diseases mourn, on account of their being kept from public worship; but the victims of this extraordinary disorder were never heard so to do. I was at first greatly surprised, after hearing that patients could not get to public worship, to find them the next day as active as if they had not been subject to any indisposition. But I have since found it very common after the paroxysms are removed, for the patient to appear perfectly well till the approach of the next Sabbath; though most of the faculty agree, that there is a low fever to be perceived during the days of interval, which is called "*febris mundi*," or the worldly fever. There seems also to be a loss of appetite for savory food, and an entire want of relish for the bread of life which it is thought might be of service to remove their disease, as one both skilled and experienced has asserted that it was more to him than his necessary food: and another has recommended it as particularly agreeable to the taste. One circumstance I had almost forgotten, viz: that those who have not refused to pay attention to the form of religion, if they are subject to Sunday sickness, generally

feel somewhat chilly and listless, about the hour of secret retirement and family devotion. From some symptoms in the families where this disease has made its first appearance, there is reason to fear that it is contagious. Some children have received the infection from their parents, and I expect every week to see it more prevalent in the vicinity of several families, who are dreadfully under the power of the disorder. The symptoms of yawning are evident in some, and of lethargy in others, who are not yet so far gone as to keep from public worship.

XVI.

“THE WEATHER WAS THREATENING.”—This, then, was the reason why so few were at church on last Sunday. Many are very greatly afraid of the *weather's* threats, who, however, care nothing for the frown of their Maker. Yes! the weather on Sunday is always wrong; too hot, too cold, too wet, too cloudy. Sometimes, perhaps twice in the year, a Sunday appears

———“so clear, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky.”

The thermometer is right at last, and then there is a rush to church. There is no possibility of blaming any but themselves, and the fine day *shames* them to church. But next Sunday, after a careful investigation, a cloud is seen which, looking black, of course, threatens, and consequently a general alarm is created. It is discovered that there is a disposition to cold, and that care is very necessary. The same persons, however, had made arrangements for a concert, on the next Wednesday, when a celebrated singer would perform; the day came, and with it rain. Some one suggested health, that there was some risk in such weather. No! there was not the least danger, as they would use precautions to keep off the damp, and they went. The

concert was quite full that night, while only thirteen were at the week service. Had this rain occurred on Sunday, no umbrella could have kept it off—Sunday rains being particularly searching; and, of course, no prudent person goes to church. On Sundays our friends look to see if the weather *threatens*: on week days they look to see if it is *clearing up*. Strange inconsistency! And one that will continue until some charitable person invents a Sunday umbrella.*

“WORSHIPPERS OF THE SUN.”—The worship of the sun, under the name of Baal, was once nearly universal in Asia; and it demands a doubt whether the race of sun worshippers has become wholly extinct, even in Christian lands. For we have with us many who take no part in public worship, except *when the sun shines*. If the skies are overcast, their duty seems veiled from view—if a light mist is falling, or if there is a moderate rain, the main attraction of worship is gone, and they are absent from God’s house. Whether this justifies the inference that the sun is their god, or that fair weather is their god, the reader will judge. But it has been common to call them “fair weather Christians.” But *Sun worshippers* could be as easily, and as truly spoken.

XVII.

“I HAD COMPANY.”—A company of Sabbath breakers—and to please them, *you* must also break the Sabbath by neglecting your church. But why not take your company with you to church? You would thus be the means of doing them great good, for they would be in the way of hearing that God has one day in seven, which he wishes not only every one to keep holy, but also “the stranger within thy gates,” that is, the company that visits you. Should they be indisposed to go with you, you should kindly excuse your-

* See page 100.

self; and if they become displeased, you had better offend them, than your Maker; and, after all, their displeasure may lessen an intimacy which is any thing but profitable.

XVIII.

"I DO NOT LIKE THE PREACHER."—But you should not attend church,—merely to hear the preacher, for Christ says that "His house is a house of prayer," and prayer is as superior in importance to preaching, as receiving a blessing is to hearing it. This going to hear the preacher, is likely to prove a species of man-worship, and the devotee will at length think heaven depends on some particular mortal, who would doubtless do well if not spoiled by such flattery. The effect of this is seen in some congregations, that do not like any one to take their pastor's place for a Sunday, and some pastors so yield to this feeling, that they hesitate in extending the courtesy of an invitation to their brother ministers. A lady some years ago, on her pastor's going to a neighboring city, actually followed him to hear his sermon, and thus avoid the substitute he had provided. But while such persons cannot tolerate other pastors than their own, some do not like their own preacher. What has yours done that you dislike him? Why, perhaps nothing in particular,—or some one has slandered him, or he has plainly told the impenitent that they must repent or perish, or he has reproved kindly one of his flock who was openly breaking the promises of confirmation, or he did not know immediately when Mrs. S. was taken sick, and consequently did not go until sent for, or he does not visit Mr. B. every week, sick or well, or he visits Mrs. C. more than Mrs. D., or his *wife* does not please every body.

But perhaps you like the *man* well enough, but do not like his sermons. Do they contain false doctrine, contrary to the Church's understanding of Holy Scripture? "No! but he is

so cold, and does so little good; crowds do not flock to hear him as they do to hear Mr. —;” that is, he does not scream as though his people were deaf, nor does he say things which suppose his people wanting in common sense, nor preach to draw crowds, but endeavors to please God and his own conscience. Nor is he “successful,” for such persons as you, instead of improving by his sermons, and bringing others to hear them, take occasion always to find fault with them, and stay away for such slight causes as are discouraging. The fault is in *you*, and not in him. He is most probably a faithful minister, who preaches plain and scriptural sermons, and it is not *he* that fails of success, but the Spirit of God which employs him as an instrument, and which in vain seeks entrance into your heart, and where you repel its gracious offer, you blame the preacher. The true reason is this—you do not like him because you do not like the *truths* he preaches. It is you that are cold: for were he to preach in the same manner and tone on the best mode of making investments, or of selecting a particular candidate, he would be found animated enough; but when he reproves sin, then he is too cold, or too long, or anything for an excuse. Holy Scripture explains your distaste when it says, “every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” Doubtless you think the Bible itself cold, and consequently neglect its study; but when you wake up to a sense of your real condition, you will think very differently.

“Judge not the preacher, for he is thy judge;
If thou mislike, thou conceivest him not.
God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot:
The worst speak something good. If all want sense,
God takes a text and preacheth patience.

“He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.
He that, by being at church, escapes the ditch
Which he might fall in by companions, gains.
He that loves God’s abode, and to combine
With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

“Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part :
Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasure thither,
Christ purged His temple, so must thou thy heart :
All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together
To cozen thee. Look to thy actions well,
For churches either are our Heaven or our Hell !”

As illustrating the prevailing fastidiousness in “choosing the preacher,” the following is greatly to the point :—

“The people in one of the out parishes in Virginia, wrote to Dr. Rice, then at the head of a Theological Seminary, for a minister. They wanted a man of first rate talents, for they very much needed building up. They wanted one that could write well, for the young people were very nice in this matter. They wanted one that visited a good deal—a duty their former minister had neglected. They wanted a *gentleman*, for some thought a great deal about that, and so they went on, describing a perfect minister. They lastly mentioned that they gave their minister a salary of three hundred and fifty dollars; but if the Doctor would send an acceptable man, they would raise fifty dollars more. The Doctor wrote in reply, that they had *better call old Dr. Dwight from heaven*, for he did not know any one in *this* world that answered their description, and as Dr. Dwight had been long living on *spiritual* food, he might not need so much for the body, and possibly might live on four hundred dollars.

XIX.

“I DO NOT LIKE YOUR FORMS OF PRAYER.”—But you may have conceived an early prejudice against them, and been taught that, unless a man prays extemporaneously in a congregation, God will hardly hear what is offered up. Perhaps you have never examined the subject; if not, consider this brief argument for forms of public devotion. When prayer is extemporaneous, the hearer must first ascertain what is said, he must then attend to its import,—and *then* ascends his devotion; but, in a form, he knows what *is* the prayer; he understands it, being familiar with it, and his devotion ascends immediately—supposing him to have the spirit of prayer, for, without that, prayer of any kind is vain. For this reason a true worshipper is less liable to distraction of mind with a form, than with extemporaneous expression. Besides this, the worship of the Jewish Church, in which Christ and His apostles united, “going to the temple to pray,” was always in a prescribed form. So in the early Christian Church, and among the Churches of the Reformation, there was no objection to forms. The Lutheran still retains them, Luther preferring a form for his *private* devotion. Mr. Wesley compiled a prayer-book for his American followers, and to this day, the English Wesleyans use one, and Adam Clarke, the Methodist Commentator, remarked, “The Prayer-Book, next to the Bible, is the book of my understanding and my heart.” A form, moreover, tends to preserve from error. How could the Trinity be depressed, or the Virgin deified in a Church, where our Liturgy is used? Dr. Buchanan, speaking of the Syrian Christians, who, by the use of forms, retained the essentials of Christianity, says, “Wo to the declining Church that has no Liturgy.”

FORMS OF PRAYER ON THE SAN FRANCISCO.—“At a mo-

ment when hope was almost abandoned, despair on every countenance, and death in the most appalling form seeming inevitable, 'Do, sir, pray for us,' was the urgent request to a Reverend clergyman. Some one having said, 'Oh, sir, in this awful crisis, your Prayer-Book can be of no service to you'—the only response to this, by the faithful Herald of the Cross, the Missionary of the God of Mercy, was to fall on his knees, and with a fervor that penetrated every heart, he implored, in the solemn words of the Litany :

"O God the Father of Heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O God the Son, Redeemer of the World, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

"O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons and One God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.'

"The effect of this was electrifying. Tears were in every eye, and they all, as if with one heart and one voice, joined in supplicating their God, to save them from a watery grave, themselves, their wives, and their children—when He, who rides on the whirlwind, directs the storm, and commands the winds and the waves, 'peace, be still,' and there was a calm, raised their sinking hearts, granting the earnest prayers of the humble suppliants."

XX.

"THE SERVICE IS SO LONG."—Here there is a difference of opinion. The Church in its appointment thought it of just the right length; sufficiently comprehensive to embrace every necessary want, and yet not so long as to be tedious. You differ from the Church, and think the hour and a half of prayers in the morning and evening combined,

—too long. Suppose you try and shorten it: you cannot compress the *language*, as it conveys its meaning in the fewest words; nor can you remove the substance, for in the removal of any petition, thousands of voices would exclaim, “spare that tree, touch not a single bough.” Perhaps you are one of those who find *all* prayer too long, never having time to pray even privately. No wonder, then, that you find our service too long; your mind is on every thing else but the prayer; and you would not care if God were not addressed at all. You are a *spectator* of the service, and not a performer; you do not respond, nor take any active part in the service, for you are engaged looking round, or thinking of your business, and feel no more interest in what is occurring, than you do in the reading of some annual charity report. But if you will, “with humble voice and pure heart,” unite in the confession, prayers and thanksgiving, the length will disappear. A foreign language would doubtless prove tiresome, but when you understand it, every word has a meaning: so, if you attend to the service not as foreign, but as that which, by attention, you may understand, you will find yourself more concerned in asking pardon, than at first you would suppose; you would conclude that an hour in the morning, and half an hour in the evening, are not too much “to render thanks for the great benefits received, to set forth God’s most worthy praise, to hear God’s most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul.”

XXI.

“I CANNOT FIND THE PLACES.”—Did you ever try? Perhaps you have not cared to find them, and of course the places will not find themselves. It is sad to notice, that even some Episcopalians fail in understanding the Prayer-

Book sufficiently to know the various places, and the appropriate postures; — whereas a little attention would prevent difficulty, for, the rules being permanent, once known, they would always be a sure guide. Suppose you try *now* to find them. On the third page of your Prayer-Book you will see an Index or “Table of Contents,” and in it, nearly half way down the page, “The order for Daily Morning Prayer,” with the number annexed. Turn to that number, and you will see a mark immediately before the words “The Minister,” &c. This mark (¶), called a paragraph, is the *notice of a rule to direct the minister and congregation*. By reference to the same Index you will find the page of “The Selection of Psalms,” or “the Psalter;” the “Table of Lessons;” so also with “The Litany”—“Selection of Psalms in Metre,” “The Order for the Administration of the Lord’s Supper,” a part of which is used after the “Psalms in Metre” every Sunday. You will also learn the pages where are “The Collects, Epistles and Gospels throughout the year.” To find the *particular* Collect, etc., for each Sunday, the easiest plan is to consult a Church Almanac, or a Church paper. The Collect, etc. for one Sunday being found, and a mark placed there, you will have no difficulty with the *next* Sunday. Should any unforeseen case arise, any Episcopal friend will assist you in understanding it. It is not hard to find the places if you seek them: but the stranger who, passing through a city, will not take the trouble to read the street-names on each corner, must lay the blame of his tiresome walk, not on the city but on his own negligence.*

XXII.

“YOUR CHURCH IS TOO EXCLUSIVE.”—How so? all societies must in some degree exclude those not members, otherwise they cease to be societies. So every society must have

* See page 111.

a particular mode of electing officers, which is exclusive of all others not so elected. Hence we exclude all from preaching or administering the Sacraments, who are not appointed by the only authority we recognize, and *you* do precisely the same, for you do not allow every one to rise and preach who thinks himself qualified, or whom others think qualified, unless those others be the particular board of examiners you recognize. Should a member of your congregation attempt to preach or administer the Sacraments without the approbation of the proper committee, you would not only not receive him, but reject him for Schism. So, you perceive, our Church is not more exclusive than yours: the difference being not in the exclusiveness, but in our belief that Episcopacy is the Divinely appointed authority, while you believe such authority depends upon human expediency. Now, if you will prove that our claim to the Divine institution of Episcopacy is *not* founded "on Holy Scripture and the testimony of ancient authors," you will prove that we *are* too exclusive, but until you do so we cannot surrender a principle which we believe to be based on God's word and primitive practice.

In an address to the convention of Mississippi, Bishop Otey well defines our Church's position in this respect: "much misrepresentation prevails in regard to the views of Episcopalians in declining to unite with other denominations in what are usually denominated, 'revival meetings,' 'protracted meetings,' and the like. Our practice in these cases is regulated by a desire to preserve harmony and peace in conformity with the vows each clergyman makes, at his ordination, to 'maintain and set forward quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people,' no less than by a regard to principles of ecclesiastical order and worship." *** "Without controversy, the *order* of the Gospel as set forth in the New Testament is as much a revelation from God as the *faith* of the Gospel, and equally binding on men. Nor is it conceivable how the institution of Christianity itself could

have been kept up and perpetuated in our world without the preservation of its *order*. As, therefore, in some denominations, articles of faith, and in nearly all the derivation of their ministry, are in direct opposition to our views of revealed truth, Episcopalians cannot yield to the demands which they make of acknowledgment in regard to the Scriptural and Apostolic foundation on which they claim their ecclesiastical organization to rest, without such a surrender of their own principles as would mark their whole religious profession with inconsistency and indifference."

Bishop Hobart, in his Charge of 1817, admirably says, "God searches and mercifully judges the purposes of the heart, and assuredly honest purity of intention and zealous endeavor to know and do His will, will not fail of a reward from Him who is no respecter of persons, but is the equal and kind parent of all the human race. Still, charity, though it should always *soften* the rigid features of truth, cannot *change* her divine character nor dispense with her sacred obligations."

XXIII.

"I COULD NOT GET READY IN TIME."—And unfortunately some persons never *are* ready, but when all the congregation are quietly listening, perhaps to the first lesson, these persons come up the aisle. From their never being in time for the confession of sins, one might think that they had no sins to confess. There is one sin, however, which they have forgotten, and which should be acknowledged *next* Sunday, and that is, their disturbing the devotions of the congregation, and their serious interruption of the minister. What can be the reason they are so late invariably? Is it to attract attention? Charity answers no, and puts the best construction on their lateness. They are perhaps thoughtless, but then, they are not so thoughtless as to other things. They can reach

the *car* in time,—and why not be in time for service? Is an engagement with man more important than one with God? Some one suggests that the evil would be cured by a change of hour; so it would, if the fault were in the time, but if service began at noon,—some would still be too late. The sight of a person habitually late at church, reminds one, of those virgins who did not fill their lamps in time, and hence sought entrance in vain. Sometimes lateness is unavoidable, and therefore excusable. In such case, “better late than never;” but even then, there will be no interruption, if you will pause at the door until the next change of posture.

“Late at church, unless for causes unavoidable, is a sign of a heart not right with God. To say nothing of the indecency of disturbing the other worshippers by noisy footsteps, with what reverence can such a one regard the presence of Him, of whom it is said, ‘the Lord is in His Holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him.’ How would these irreverent worshippers venture into the presence of an earthly sovereign with such a badge of contempt in their hand. No, they would fear to offend a king, but not the King of kings. The many sins involved in their want of punctuality in attendance at God’s house, make it a very grave evil. Their own devotions are hindered, those of others disturbed. Their minister is grieved, their God slighted, and all for what? A trifling indulgence of sloth which a little resolution would overcome.”

. “Oh! be drest;
 Stay not for the other pin: why thou hast lost
 A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest
 Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,
 Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

XXIV.

"MY CLOTHES ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR CHURCH."—Then, of course, you do not show yourself in *any* company, for if you do, your clothes *are* suitable for church. To go to other places with the apparel you have, and yet stay from church, must be on the supposition that it is a kind of fair for the exhibition of finery, and each exhibitor a candidate for prizes. The *Jews* in public worship rent their garments, because of their sins: some of our people, on the contrary, will not go to worship unless they have a bonnet or coat just from the maker's hand, thereby showing that they regard the opinion of their neighbors more than the favor of their Maker. And to make the absurdity more glaring, most of the congregation are engaged in worshipping God, not having come to notice whether clothes were old or new. There may, indeed, be some few triflers who come to make remarks;— but the smile or sneer of such will not affect any sensible person. Be neat in your dress, and you will be respected more for wearing clothes that are old, than for wearing new which you have not the means to pay for: and whether you please man or not, you please God and your own conscience. This excuse which keeps you from church, has its source in vanity, and when you know your own heart and the account to be given to God, you will experience no difficulty in this respect. Should you not have everything exactly as you wish, you will have what is more important, "the clothing of humility."

XXV.

"HE MUST HAVE MEANT ME."—How do you know that the minister meant you? Did he tell you so, or point his finger at you, or call you by name? No! but you are sure

of it, and for the best of reasons: a guilty conscience accusingly said, "Thou art the man." Then, your quarrel is with conscience, not with the minister. A sermon is intended to warn against some sin, or excite to some duty. It is preached to all: if any have been guilty of the sin, or neglected the duty, it is designed for such. If they have not been guilty, it is no otherwise intended than to guard them against a temptation; but as the minister cannot see the heart, the existence of any sin can be known only to conscience and to God. The minister, in God's name, says, "Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and "thou shalt not covet." Of course, he means all covetous persons and Sabbath breakers, (for a sermon without meaning would be a waste of time), and if you have been guilty of these or any other sins, he certainly means you, and your duty is to receive the reproof thankfully and to profit by it: many persons, however, not only continue in the sin itself, but commit another one in being angry at the reprover. While some persons are so self-important, that the minister can preach no sermon without meaning them, there are many more who take no suggestion, make no application, and the arrow of truth glances from them and buries itself in their neighbor. In vain is their character sketched; in vain is the finger pointed at their besetting sin. They look around to see the effect upon some one else: a searching sermon does them indeed real good,—“the best they ever heard,”—but its merit consists in suiting “Tompkins” so well. Such persons are much more generous with the sermon, than with their contributions, for they give all their share (and that a very large part) to their acquaintances. They resemble the miser who, on hearing a sermon on covetousness, remarked that it suited so many people, that he would really go around collecting to-morrow, and was sure that *people* would increase their liberality. This class is much more numerous than the first, and no sermon will ever reach them, until they hear

that on the last day, and then there will be no mistake as to *its* meaning.

XXVI.

“CALL AGAIN.”—And accordingly the church collector leaves you, disheartened at his fruitless call: his patience has been tried, and much of his valuable time lost through these excuses. But this is not all; the vestry are unable to pay the salaries which are due. Your minister, particularly, who depends altogether upon what the church promises, must perhaps make his scanty fare still scantier, deny himself the most necessary books and furniture, and bear in silence that keen sense of injury which “call again” inflicts: or he may be contemplating a removal from the congregation he truly loves, to another where he will not be exposed to such disappointment. And this injustice is the more glaring, in that he may have exhausted his means in preparing to give his congregation suitable instruction, and is ready to promote at all times their welfare, and to administer the church’s offices from the cradle to the grave. If you loved Christ as you should, you would delight in supporting Christ’s *ministers*. You would deem it a privilege to contribute, and would not surrender your means, only to avoid the collector’s importunity. You would have your dues ready *for* the call, and thus you would bless the church and bless yourself also: for “what a man soweth that shall he also reap.” Tell the *tax-gatherer* to “call again,” for he can afford to wait, but do not tell the *church collector* so.

XXVII.

“THE TIMES ARE SO HARD.”—But did you ever know it otherwise in church matters? Let any benevolent plan be proposed at any time, and immediately the times are found to be hard. Money becomes scarce, and will command so

much per cent. a month; the imports exceed the exports, and the church's self-denying friend, who came for a donation, goes away with a lecture. But let any new fashion be introduced, or a famous singer come upon the stage, or some political measure require furtherance, or any improvement connecting distant parts of the country, and at once "hard times" smooths his wrinkled brow, and pours his treasure on the table, until the church is named, when the money is grasped as though the collector were begging for himself, and not for Him whose agent he is! Many are liberal where pride, vanity, or ambition makes demands upon them. For amusements alone, in the city of New York, ten thousand dollars were nightly spent when times were very hard. France must yield her silks and wines without cessation, and no cost is spared on a single entertainment; but economy begins, when God requires your benevolence. The times with you are undoubtedly hard, but it is you that make them so: for, devoting all available means to self-gratification, there is, of course, nothing left for charity. *You* are harder than the times; but it will be still harder to leave the treasures of earth, without making preparation for treasures in heaven.

XXVIII.

"CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME."—Home is then the scene of *your* benevolence; the interest which is not found for distant places, all centres in home. But is it so? By no means; for when the claims of *home* are presented, some other excuse defeats the application. Charity begins at home, but she does not stay there, for then she would cease to be that charity which came from heaven to earth, and which does not cease expanding until the gospel is preached "to all nations." The heathen, indeed, are at our doors, but are you doing any thing for *them*; clothing them, educating them, and, above all, providing for their attendance on the means of

grace, preaching to them by causing them to hear preaching? By no means; this is but an excuse for getting rid of an obligation which makes "every Christian a missionary." You *pray* "that God's way may be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations," but as this prayer costs nothing, while the corresponding action demands self-denial, no action is had, and the missionary scheme is found objectionable; and, indeed, every scheme which requires the cheerful opening of hand and heart. If charity had staid at home, you would never have heard of the Saviour; the early settlers of this country would have died without the gospel, for Dr. Bray says, that on pleading the need of America for ministers and books, his greatest obstacle was the assertion, "that the Church's charity was wanted for the poor in England." And shall we, who owe every thing to missions, confine their benefits to ourselves?

"Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?"

XXIX.

"I MUST BE JUST BEFORE BEING GENEROUS."—Certainly; but if you mean that the claims which the Church has on you are those that come from generosity alone, you are greatly mistaken. Debt to a fellow man may have a greater *legal*, but not a greater moral obligation, than debt to CHRIST through His Church. The Church is not so much obliged to you, as you are to it, and therefore in discharging the Church's claims upon you, you are not generous so much as you are just; its gifts to you being infinitely more valuable than yours to it. It was a remark of an ancient divine, that "those we should count our benefactors, who gave us an opportunity of doing them service." According to which principle, the Church is

generous to you in giving you the privilege of exercising that charity, without which all our doings are nothing worth. A legal debt to man is indeed inferior, in its extent, to the debt you owe the Church; for, in the first place, in many instances you need not *contract* a legal debt; and secondly, when contracted, it can generally be paid: but the support of the Church is of unavoidable obligation, as all are obliged by God to be members of it. And this debt so far transcends our highest exertions, that we still are in arrears. Debt to man, collectable by law, is thought to be more binding because some penalty is generally attached to non-payment, while ordinarily there is no penalty attached to neglect of Church dues, or if there is, it is rarely, if ever, enforced. But penalties do not make an offence, they only *define* its punishment. If all laws for the collection of debts from man to man were abolished to-morrow, the moral obligation, that which exists in the sight of God and every honest man, would not be in the slightest degree affected. So, though no human penalty enforce the payment of Church dues, the obligation remains in the sight of God, who has penalties of His own both here and hereafter.

But it may be said there are legal Church dues, such as pew-rents and subscriptions, which, voluntarily assumed, are binding, and which given up are *not* binding, and that, in such a case, all claims of the Church become void. Such, however, is not a correct conclusion. Support in the shape of *pew-rent* or *subscription* may cease, but support itself, in *some other form*, is just as obligatory, supposing a person's *ability* to continue; for obligation to support the Church is not measured by *pew-rent*, but by *ability*. The various States of our country, in making dues to the Church collectable, as any other dues from man to man, which can be contracted or not, at pleasure, mainly intended to give the Church the ability to meet the legal claims against *it*, and thus avoid the penalty of not meeting them. But these States never con-

templated defining the limits of the Church's benevolence, nor the limits of each person's obligation to the Church. Nor did Vestries design any thing of the kind in the assessment of pew rates, which were meant to preserve the Church by meeting its necessary expenses. It is true that a person's pew-rent or subscription may be to the extent of his ability; in which case, if given with the proper spirit, it is as acceptable to CHRIST as the offering of the widow. But, in the greater number of cases, the payment of the pew-rent or annual subscription does *not* measure the obligation, as where persons in the clear receipt of one or two thousand dollars yearly, subscribe or rent to the extent of five, ten or twenty dollars; a proportion which has no parallel in the ancient Jewish or early Christian Church. If Church rents were *abolished*, the Scriptural obligation would remain in force, to give or rather return according to self-denying ability; a return which is not a generous gift merely, but a just thank-offering which can never repay benefits received, and which still leaves the most liberal giver "an unprofitable servant." Until the *moral* claim of the Church, distinct from that which is legal, be better understood, the Church's support must fluctuate according to the capricious feelings of each member, and the annual reports of our various Societies will be a stereotyped tale of discouragement. But let the principle be established that we do not confer a favor on the Church by our gifts, as the Church does upon us by their reception,—that our offerings are privileges, and then the Church treasury will be filled by the double hand of Justice and Generosity.

The principle of giving to the Church according to our ability, implies a *fixed proportion* between our gifts and our income, and an income not merely derived from receipts, but from self-denying savings. It further implies that this sum be set apart as a sacred deposit, ready for the various objects which are presented in the Church. This proportion differs

with various individuals. Some give a tenth, some more, some less; but all could arrive at some fixed satisfactory standard, if they would only consider what the Church ought to do, compared with what she actually does; her sublime mission to the bodies and souls of men, contrasted with the mean support which her children give her. The statement that the Church has a claim on *all* her members according to ability, is of course not applicable to cases of real inability. But, then, the poor have a just claim *upon the Church*, and how is this claim met? Why, because it is not legal, and *only* moral, it is thought by many to be no claim at all, and, with dropping a dime or two in the communion plate, the whole subject is dismissed or transferred to the guardianship of the State, which indeed provides for the body and mind, but ignores the *soul*. Not until the just claims of the Church on the ability of her members are fully met, will the Church have the power to meet the just claims of inability upon her.

There is a remarkable circumstance in reference to this subject of generosity *after* justice. Many persons, in speaking of their direct obligations to Almighty God, take a peculiar delight in His attribute of Mercy, and will scarcely hear of His bearing the sword of Justice. But when it comes to the claims of the Church upon them, they are wonderfully struck with the importance of Justice, and poor Generosity must wait until sent for. Such persons would receive no injury from studying the parable of the unjust creditor, who was very willing to *receive* mercy from his Lord, but who was unwilling to have patience with *his* debtor.

XXX.

“I WILL THROW IN MY MITE.”—And down falls into the plate a halfdime, a venturesome “quarter,” or perhaps, this

new "church money," with its star, reminding us of the wise men. This mite excuse is a very common one, because supposedly fortified by Scripture; but such is not the case, for the poor widow threw in "*two mites*:" so, Mr. Smith, we shall expect hereafter *double* your usual offering. But to carry out this mite principle, we must further remember she gave of her *penury*, if not the whole, at least a part of her means of livelihood, while the much larger gifts of the rich men, being merely from their abundance, were actually less, according to ability, than hers. Now, Mr. S., suppose you imitate the widow, not only in the two mites, but in giving from your penury, or even from moderate self-denial: why, the silver mites would blush into gold. O how little this is understood! How few dispense occasionally with a dessert, that the church may have bread! And there is no immediate prospect of this mite system being shamed away, unless indeed, the information reach us that one of our clergy came to his death through insufficient food, or clothing. Such an event, read of at our breakfast tables, would rouse our members "to take into consideration the expediency of devising some means whereby they that preach the Gospel should not *starve* of the Gospel."

There are, however, some who have not even a *mite* for the Lord's treasury: to such, the following narrative is respectfully commended:

"THE BROWN TOWEL."—"One who has nothing, can give nothing," said Mrs. Sayers, the sexton's wife, as the ladies of the sewing society were busily engaged packing the contents of a large box, destined for a Western missionary.

"A person who has nothing to give, must be poor, indeed," said Mrs. L., as she deposited a pair of warm blankets in the already well-filled box.

Mrs. Sayers looked at the last-named speaker with a glance which seemed to say, "You, who never have known self-

denial, cannot feel for me," and remarked, "You surely think one can be too poor to give."

"I once thought so, but have learned from joyful experience, that no better investment can be made, even from the depths of poverty, than lending to the Lord."

Seeing the ladies listening attentively to the conversation, Mrs. L. continued, "Perhaps as our work is finished, I can do no better than to give you my experience on the subject. It may be the means of showing you that God will reward the cheerful giver.

"During the first twenty-eight years of my life, I was surrounded with wealth; and not until I had been married for nine years, did I know a want which money could satisfy, or feel the necessity of exertion. Reverses came, with fearful suddenness; and, before I had recovered from the blow, I found myself the wife of a very poor man, with five little children, dependent upon our exertions.

"From that hour I lost all thought of any thing, but the care of my family. Late hours and hard work were my portion, and to my unskilled hands it seemed at first a bitter lot. My husband strove anxiously to gain a subsistence, and barely succeeded. We changed our place of residence several times, in hopes of doing better, but without improvement.

"Every thing seemed against us. Our well-stocked wardrobe had become so exhausted, that I felt justified in absenting myself from the house of God with my children, for want of suitable apparel. While in this low condition, I went to church one evening, where my poverty-stricken appearance would escape notice, and took my seat near the door. An agent from the West preached, and begged contributions to the Home Missionary cause. His appeal brought tears to my eyes, and painfully reminded me of my past days of prosperity, when I could give from my abundance to all who called upon me. It never entered my mind that the appeal for assistance in any way concerned me, with my poor children

banished from the house of God by poverty, while I could only venture out under the friendly protection of darkness. I left the church more submissive to my lot, with a prayer in my heart that those whose consciences had been addressed might respond. I tried in vain to sleep that night. The words of the text, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom,' seemed continually sounding in my ears. The eloquent entreaty of the speaker to all, however poor, to give a mite to the Lord, and receive the promised blessing, seemed addressed to me. I rose early the next morning, and looked over all my worldly goods in search of something worth bestowing, but in vain; the promised blessing seemed beyond my reach.

"Hearing that the ladies of the church had filled a box for the missionary's family, I made one more effort to spare something. All was poor and threadbare; what should I do? At last I thought of my towels. I had six, of coarse brown linen, but little worn. They seemed a scanty supply for a family of seven, and yet I took one from the number, and putting it in my pocket, hastened to the house where the box was kept, and quietly slipped it in.

"I returned home with a light heart, feeling that my Saviour's eye had seen my sacrifice, and would bless my effort to do right.

"From that day, success attended all my husband's efforts in business. In a few months our means increased so that we were able to attend church, and send our children to the Sabbath-school, and before ten years had passed, our former prosperity had returned fourfold. 'Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over,' had been given us.

"It may seem superstitious to you, my dear friends, but we date all our success in life to God's blessing, following that humble gift of deep poverty.

"Wonder not that from that day I deem few too poor to give, and that I am a firm believer in God's promise that he will repay with interest even in this life all we lend to him."

Glances of deep interest unmixed with envy, were cast from the windows at Mrs. L., as, after bidding the ladies adieu, she stepped into her luxurious carriage.

Her consistent benevolence had proved to all, that in her prosperity she still retained the same Christian spirit which in her days of poverty had led to the bestowal of the BROWN TOWEL.

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Sayers, "if we all had such a self-denying spirit we might fill another box at once. I'll never again think I am TOO POOR TO GIVE."

XXXI.

"I WILL GIVE AS MUCH AS 'WILLIAMS.'"—And Williams, who is thus chosen as the standard of contribution, is known to give as little as any member of the congregation; so that this is an excellent mode of refusing to give for some charitable object, and at the same time retaining the credit of liberality. But who is Williams, that you adhere so closely to him? CHRIST says we are to give from self-denying ability, and not according to the deeds of others. Besides, you do not understand his accounts. He may really be unable to give half so much as you think he should, and he may have perfectly satisfactory reasons for his conduct, which he does not think it necessary to disclose. And supposing him to give far less than his ability; if you insist on reaching his standard of contribution, you must also expect to reach his standard of contractedness, and consequently be exposed, as he is, to God's displeasure.

No; let Williams do as he pleases, do you act as responsible for yourself to God. As it is, when A breaks his arm

B looks around to notice how much C will give, thus showing a much more liberal disposition with his neighbor's money than with his own: thus almost every purse is closed until C opens his, and consequently benevolent enterprises languish and sometimes die, because one stands looking at another. However, the time is soon coming when you must surrender every thing, and you would do well "to make to *yourself* friends of the unrighteous mammon, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

XXXII.

"I WISH YOU SUCCESS."—A very kind wish, if sincere; but when the wisher is one who can give substantial aid, yet substitutes *wishes*, he is mistaken in what he says. He does not wish success; otherwise he would take, as in other things, the only mode to secure it: namely, his means and personal influence. Were every one to answer similarly, the collector would have on his book some five hundred wishes, which accomplish no other result than defeating the object: for should you not already know it, it is time that you be apprized of a secret, viz.: if you wish to kill any benevolent enterprise for CHRIST and His Church, do not oppose it directly, for that might excite the energies of its friends, and might lead to the supposition that you were close with your money, but "wish it success" and do nothing; say to the object "be warmed and filled, and yet give it not those things which are needful for it;" decline any *agency*; keep from its meetings; and you will, as far as *you* can, kill it effectually. You will not be blamed, for did you not "wish it success, and always speak favorably of it?" A similar result may be attained by "feeling for its wants;" "thinking on it;" "intending to do something;" but be sure you do nothing, or if the collector should call frequently, give him something,

and for the remainder let him take your feelings. He will not trouble you soon again. If all others do as you do, he must abandon the work in despair.

You *feel*! But how do you feel? five dollars' worth? two? one? Dr. Johnson once told Boswell to "beware of these feeling men, for," says he, "they are very apt to pay their debts in feelings." If, however, debts are so paid, what will such men do with *charities*?

XXXIII.

"SO MANY CALLS."—For what purpose? for the payment of numerous bills made for life's luxuries,—its pomps and vanities? Oh no! "so many calls for the Church:" that is, some six or eight objects a year are presented to our friend's consideration. He was called on only a month ago, and with that call he parries every other, just as the Indian holds up some prisoner he has taken to shield him from the arrows of his pursuers. He gave so much on such an occasion, and that is used as a scarecrow for all future collectors. It would seem that any one loving Christ would *rejoice* at the increasing calls to extend His kingdom, and would expect that any once made should increase. Christ, through his Church, takes the attitude of a suppliant, that His people may know the superior blessedness of giving to receiving: and yet He is denied, because the calls are so frequent! But He does not call upon you as often as *you* call upon Him, for from Him you daily receive your breath, your reason, and all the comforts of this life. He is called on to protect you by His providence, and to supply mercies as numerous as minutes. Above all, He is called on to spare you under provocations of ingratitude which you daily heap upon Him. And yet, with all these calls, never has "His arm been shortened, or His ear heavy." But when He calls on *you*, and that, too,

for your own benefit, you treat Him as some troublesome mendicant. "Freely ye have received" and sparingly do ye give. Suppose He should take you at your word, and say, "Yes, I *have* called too often, I will do so no more:" then, indeed, there would be no more calls on your charity, but then, also, would you lose your ability *to be* charitable; your talents, unimproved, would be taken away. If your life were spared, which still would be an exercise of His mercy, you would wander abroad an outcast, exposed to every stress of weather, and sensible of your former blessings by their withdrawal. But if there are so many calls on you, suppose you retaliate, and make calls on other people. "By no means," you reply; "you would sooner *give* than do that; you could not think of exposing your feelings in such a way." Very well! then, of course, you will consider that those who call on you have feelings also, and you will doubtless be particularly careful to render their stony path as smooth as possible; at least, you will not inflict another pang in addition to the many they have already experienced in their arduous round. The truth is, that a person who for Christ's sake, undertakes a collecting tour, approaches as near a moral martyr as is attainable in the present state of the Church. He, or rather she (for men are not generally courageous enough for this,) deserves encouragement, not only for the worthy object in view, but for cheerfully undergoing that laceration of feelings which every collector must experience.

That there are so many calls, should be a cause of thankfulness to every true friend of Christ. It shows that His kingdom is extending, and that the seed of past liberality is bearing, after many days, its fruit. But, further, the many calls are so many opportunities of securing God's blessing upon our *temporal* affairs. For, Holy Scripture declares, that, as we sow we shall reap; and when the poor widow was about consuming her last provision, the gift from that morsel to the prophet was so productive, that, "the barrel of meal did

not waste, neither did the cruse of oil fail, until the Lord sent rain upon the land." An eminent saint once said, that "he was too poor *not* to give. He could not afford to be sparing in seed wheat;" and Baxter said, that "his affairs most succeeded, when he was most liberal; and since he had been more sparing in his charities, he had not so prospered." Says another, "I am as now able to increase my contributions to five hundred dollars per annum, for the support of Christ's cause among my fellow men, and to pay it as promptly, as I was seventeen years ago to give twelve dollars per annum, when I first commenced my contributions."*

Should there be, therefore, "so many calls," if thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly, to give of that little: for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity.

"Restore to God his due, in tithe and time:

A tithe purloined cankers the whole estate.

Sundays observe. Think, when the bells do chime,

'Tis angel's music; therefore come not late—

God then deals blessings: if a king did so,

Who would not haste, nay give, to see the show.

XXXIV.

"I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH."—And this is considered a sufficient excuse for plunging into every species of vanity. It is thought that Church membership imposes restraints which do not belong to persons who are not Church-members. But *are* you not a Church member? Were you not baptized? Then you are one, and all the obligations of membership rest upon you. You reply, however, that "this

* Spirit of Missions, for 1847.

was done without your consent." True; but your consent is not necessary for entering into a covenant with God. In some cases, it is not necessary even to your making a covenant with *man*. By your natural birth, you became an American citizen, and are obliged to keep all the laws of your country, and yet your consent was never asked to those laws. So, in Baptism, God imposes duties upon you without your knowledge; because, being your Maker and Preserver, He has a *right* so to do, much more than an earthly parent has to correct and instruct his child. You may indeed neglect your duties, but you cannot elude your responsibilities. But you mean that you are not a *communicant*, and, because not, have a greater license than if you were one; you can do that with impunity "which a communicant cannot do." But is this so? Does the Church understand God as giving His commands thus:—"Thou who art a communicant, shalt have no other gods but me?" By no means, for he addresses all His people: and you yourself acknowledge the obligation to obey *some* of these laws, and why not all? Why make a distinction where God has made none? No; your duty to repent comes not from admission to the Holy Communion, but from the relation you sustain to God as your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. It is true that participation in the communion *increases* our obligation, because, though it does not impose new duties on us, it gives us strength to perform those that are old; and, sinning against additional grace, we have, of course, increased condemnation. By communion we publicly confess our obligation to keep all God's commands, and receive also help to fulfil it: but while by such confession more is expected of us than if we did not so confess, the *obligation* itself to obey God, in all respects, is unaffected, and the penalty still continues. To pursue a course of worldly pleasure, and then to excuse ourselves on the ground that we are not communicants, is to justify the sin of worldliness by the excuse that we are committing another sin. You differ

from a communicant in no other respect than this:—that, whereas he acknowledges that all God's commands bind him, and repents that he has not kept them as he should, and seeks in the Holy Communion grace to do better, you do not confess that all of them bind you, nor repent of your sins (though requiring repentance as much as he), nor seek the grace of repentance in God's appointed way.

XXXV.

“I AM NOT FIT FOR COMMUNION.”—And this is said with as much assurance as though it were a perfect justification for neglecting the Sacrament. Indeed, at first sight, it seems to pay a compliment to that ordinance, and then to take credit on the ground of humility. There is, indeed, a sense in which the best of persons are not fit, as is beautifully expressed in the words, “We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table.” This, however, is a *worthy* unworthiness, which sometimes keeps truly pious persons away, when it should be the very cause of their coming. But this is not the meaning of the excuse above mentioned. They who offer it are indeed not fit, because they do not repent of their unfitness, nor seek to amend. In truth, the subject gives them very little concern, and they meet the Saviour's express command by a *mere* excuse. Nor *should* they come: they would receive injury if they did so. Their sin is, not in staying from the Communion because they are unfit, but in not securing the necessary fitness; not repenting as they might; not putting on the wedding garment offered for their acceptance. They will break CHRIST's command in one respect, because by their impenitence they are breaking it in another respect. And they shall find that two wrongs never make a right, particularly when done by the same person. Hear what the Church says to such: “If any man say, I am a grievous

sinner, and therefore am afraid to come, wherefore, then, do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say ye will not come?"

XXXVI.

"I AM AS GOOD AS SOME WHO DO COMMUNE."—Very probably: perhaps better. But what inference do you draw from this fact? That the Holy Communion is not necessary to procure you admission into heaven, because some communicants are evidently unfit? Let us examine this argument a moment. It is the old fallacy, that the abuse of any object dispenses with its proper use. To be worthy communicants, so far as we know, is a necessary qualification for heaven, because of CHRIST's commands, and because universal obedience is the mark of angels above and pious men below. But "some communicants are a scandal." True: and did CHRIST ever say, that all communicants would be worthy? On the contrary, He has told us that many who, on earth, had eaten and drunk in His presence, should at last be cast out. They complied, indeed, with the outward act; but not having the proper spirit they failed. Now this unworthiness of communicants does not disprove, but rather confirms CHRIST's truth: and so far from keeping any one from the Lord's table, it should lead to that careful examination which is enjoined, in the same way that the danger of spurious characters in society should lead, not to a refusal of what is valuable, but to a proper discrimination of what is valuable and what is not. If communicants fall so far below your ideas of the correct standard, suppose you set them an example. But you must first get rid of that censorious disposition, which detects faults in others and then makes those faults an excuse for neglecting your own duty.

XXXVII.

“YOU MAY BAPTIZE MY CHILD AT HOME.”—The minister must be very unkind indeed who does not appreciate the favor conferred upon him by the permission, and very obstinate that he does not avail himself immediately of your offer! If he continue firm in his position, be equally firm in yours, and send for some other minister who has not such scruples. But softly; are you aware that the Church does not allow her ministers to baptize privately, except for weighty reasons; and even then, should the child recover, it is to be brought to Church to be received into the congregation? Are you aware that you confer no favor on the minister, and that if he seems solicitous as to an early baptism at the Church, it is not on his own account, but on yours and the child’s?—that, by baptism, CHRIST conveys to your infant blessings superior to the richest legacy, and that you should be thankful that you may bring your infant to Him, as He commands and invites? Would you have your minister violate rules he has promised to obey; and, for the sake of gratifying you, offend the other parents of his congregation? There is one ingenious (not ingenuous) mode by which you can secure the baptism at home: postpone the baptism until your child is dying, for then he will not refuse to come. Before coming to such a conclusion, it would be well to remember the sinful disposition it exhibits. You believe baptism of *some* importance, otherwise it is not desirable, a mere form being but mockery. And yet you make what is important to your infant depend on the uncertainty of its illness. You forfeit the certainty of the present, for a future which may shroud your child in death before the minister arrives. CHRIST calls you to suffer your child to come to Him, and, so far as *you* can, you forbid. You are ashamed of bringing your child to JESUS in public, but are willing to do so in

private; you set at naught the prayers of the congregation in its behalf. And at the very time when you should be most grateful for deliverance from recent peril, your ingratitude manifests itself in indulged wilfulness. "Where is it mothers learn *such* love?" Such a disposition is not only liable to God's anger hereafter, but even *here* there may be a call on God's mercy for relief, but no answer: for as "He is not the God of the dead only," neither is He of the afflicted only. Let such considerations induce you on the first opportunity to take your infant to the house of God.

"Then happiest ye who blest
Back to your arms your treasure take
With Jesus' mark impressed,
To nurse for Jesus' sake."

Says Matthew Henry, "Parents should rejoice more at their children's baptism than at their birth."

XXXVIII.

"THE SPONSOR'S DUTY IS TOO WEIGHTY FOR ME."—It is pleasant to hear some one estimate properly the much neglected sponsor's office. But is it *too* weighty an undertaking? Some person, in case of the parents' death or inability, should watch over the child's spiritual interests. They have chosen you as suitable for that purpose, and why should you decline so charitable a work? If the orphan's *temporal* affairs required a guardian, there would be no want of friends and relatives to undertake *that* duty; that would not be too onerous: but is it not as necessary that some one should guard the orphan's heavenly inheritance; some particular persons who may feel a special interest therein? Is the child's soul to be exposed because none will attend to it? "But the promises are beyond my ability. I cannot answer for its re-

nouncing all sin, believing all God's word, and keeping all His commandments. I can hardly answer for myself, much less for another." From these remarks you evidently misunderstand the sponsor's duty. For the answers which you make to the minister, being for the child, do not bind *you*. The transaction is between CHRIST and the infant, the minister being CHRIST's agent, and the sponsor the infant's agent. And as what the minister says does not bind *him* personally, he acting in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; so what the sponsor says does not bind *him* personally, he acting in the name of the infant. Such answers not only do not bind you, but they do not *create* the obligation which binds the child; for in private baptism, where there are no sponsors, the child is bound by the act of baptism alone. What then, it may be asked, is the use of the sponsor's answers, if they do not bind the sponsor? Their use is to express the nature of the covenant, which consists not only in privileges received, but in duties to be done; to do for the unconscious child what you would do for a dumb adult, who, unable to speak, answered through your mouth as his interpreter; to place baptism in its true light before the people, that they may be reminded of their obligations, and to keep before the sponsors the great object of certain duties which, by the sponsorial office, they *do* undertake, and which are, "to see that this infant be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he hath here made;" to "call upon him to hear sermons, and chiefly" to "provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." These, and the other qualifications of sponsors expressed in the exhortation in the Public Baptism of Infants, are perfectly practicable. If these be done and the child yet be lost, the sponsor is in no way responsible. Says Bishop Griswold, in his Pastoral Address to the Eastern Diocese, "It is an error to suppose

that the promises of baptism are made by sponsors in their own name and behalf. The whole engagement is made in the name of the child, and nothing more or less is required and intended. The sponsors express audibly that engagement which baptism lays on the infant; they act as agents for another in the performance of a charitable work, and what they engage is not for themselves, but for the child only. . . . They *promise* to perform nothing, not even that they will teach the child religion, or bring him up in the faith and fear of God. But it is highly necessary that this should, by some one or more, be done: in the nature of the thing it is most proper, and it is generally expected that they who present the child for baptism, should see to the performance of this most essential duty. And accordingly the Church, as she ought, *enjoins it upon them*. 'It is your parts and duties to see that this infant be taught.' This is no part of their verbal engagement, but in the reason of the thing, as also from the authority of the Church, and the general understanding of Christians, it justly rests upon them, and would so rest were no responses made." It should further be noticed, that in the selection of sponsors, care should be taken to select piously disposed Episcopalians, so that the duties they undertake may be faithfully performed.

XXXIX.

"I DO NOT FEEL CAPABLE OF TEACHING IN SUNDAY SCHOOL."
—Then try to *raise* your capacity to the requisite standard, and do not permit this excuse to deter you. You have evidently proper conceptions of the work; that it is one of difficulty and patience; and you have, properly, humble views of yourself, which is much better than to think the work a light thing, or yourself above it. But how can you speak so confidently of your capacity when you have not tried it?

Perhaps if you entered upon it heartily, you might find yourself more successful than you suppose. The qualifications are: punctuality in school attendance, steady application, preparing by previous study the appointed lessons from Scripture and the Catechism, meeting with the teachers on the appointed occasions, and visiting the scholars, to promote, by God's blessing, their spiritual welfare and that of their parents. Now this does not demand great learning. It is what you are capable of doing, and your capacity will increase by exercise. You will understand your duty better and take a pleasure in it, so that you shall consider it a privilege. And you shall succeed in planting germs of truth in youthful minds, which will, in some cases at least, bear eternal fruit. If you work *heartily*, you will certainly be capable of doing more. It being a law of God that whosoever improves what he already has, to him shall be given more. "Teaching we learn, and giving we retain." In the beginning you will of course feel a degree of awkwardness, which will disappear as you advance. Every intelligent adult is then capable of taking a class, if he will. There are, however, pressing reasons for *your* entering on the work at the invitation of your minister; and the first is, that though these little ones have parents, they are, for all practical purposes, spiritual orphans, since they hear nothing at home of CHRIST except the blasphemy of His name. They are surrounded with every circumstance that will ruin their souls, and they need instruction as much as Chinese children, educated in the schools of the missionaries sent by our Church. And further, if allowed to grow up thus, they will become antagonists of the Church, disseminators of evil, and pests of society. They will become the parents of similar children, thus propagating sin, like leprosy, from generation to generation. Now, perhaps, the evil may be checked, while in a few years it will be too late, for then they will be beyond the opportunity of instruction. Is there no one to take charge of this class of spiritual rag-

gedness? and must the minister of Christ appeal in vain to numbers of disengaged men and women, whose only incapacity is in the will? Must he be met with that chilling plea, "I pray thee, have me excused?" Where is that charity without which all our doings are nothing worth? Shame on Christians who can be aware of the wants of fellow beings, and yet, like the Levite, look on with unconcern. It is undoubtedly true that there are persons in the Church who cannot, for a variety of reasons, teach in a Sunday School. Such persons are not likely to be asked. But when an appeal is made to *you*, by proper authority, for this purpose, you should consider that it is not only in behalf of these little ones, but of yourself. The compassion you are asked to exercise is designed to embrace your *own* internal state as well as theirs, for you must be aware of a great deficiency of grace which, unless exercised, may leave you altogether. The very life of the Christian consists in the active exercise of the talent God has given him. But if you hide it away, *it* shall be lost, and *you* shall be punished as wickedly slothful: and if you will look around in the Church, you will see it full of spiritual consumptives, always having some excuse when anything is to be done: resembling coals which, having parted with all that is combustible, present a residue that neither will burn itself or permit others to burn. These try the patience of every one in earnest, and impede every laudable effort. Disciples they are, frozen through inactivity. Now, unless you wish to be one of these spiritual paupers, be active; and where can you be better employed than in taking a class in a Sunday School, should an opportunity present itself, and should your minister make a call upon you? And when you *do* begin, be not half-hearted, half-coming, half-visiting, half-teaching, requiring always to be stimulated to your duty, for, much as the Church wants teachers, she does not want such. She wants real exercise from self-denial, without which neither yourself or class will derive any benefit. And

you should further be informed, that if the members of the Church will not exercise their Christian charity, they must exercise some other qualities ; their sloth, their self-indulgence, their covetousness. As the capacity for these expands, the capacity for every generous effort correspondingly contracts. You must exercise yourself in some way ; you must teach *in some school*, and the question is whether it shall be that of the world or the Church ? You *must* cultivate some dispositions, and the question is, shall they be sinful or holy ?

Rouse to some high and holy work of love,
 And thou an angel's happiness shalt know—
 Shalt bless the earth ; whilst in the world above
 The good by thee begun shalt onward flow,
 In many a branching stream, and wider grow.
 The seed which in these few and fleeting hours
 Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
 Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
 And yield thee fruit divine in heaven's immortal bowers.

XL.

"I HAVE NO INFLUENCE."—Perhaps not for *good*, but then you have some for *evil*. Are you sincere in your meaning that you *really* have no influence ? Suppose that some one else were to say "that it was of no consequence what you said or did, as you had no influence with any one," how angry would you be at the remark, and how soon would you show him the contrary ! Yes ; you *have* influence upon your relations and your circle of acquaintances, and you can move them by your example, conversation and prayers. Were you even in the cell of a dungeon, your writings, thoughts, and prayers, might penetrate the bars. You mean you have no influence *in the Church*. But there again you are mistaken, for by your coldness and neglect you are injuring the Church, being a stumbling-block in the way of others. God has put it upon

you to stem the progress of error, and your doing nothing does incalculable harm in allowing the flood to enter into the Church, into your family, into your heart. Mark that person in his "Beneficial Society," in his business, at an election; how he affects a whole circle around him: but in the Church, a paralysis seizes him and he *can* do nothing; that is, he *will* not do it. God sent you into the world to be influential, and placed before you proper objects. You may indeed direct your energies in another direction, but then you become an agent of evil, and severe shall be your punishment. A learned writer says, "God furnishes men with bills of credit, but few draw to their full allowance:" some indeed will not draw at all. History is full of instances of the greatest results produced by the slightest cause. A little captive maid was once the cause of curing a great man of his leprosy, and thus showing the power of God. Small as you may suppose yourself in the Church, you may, with whole heartedness, do much. You are unjust to *yourself*. Make the experiment, and in due season you shall reap if you faint not; and when you leave the world, instead of men saying that your life was useless, the results of your activity shall remain, and though dead you shall speak when the marble of your tomb shall have crumbled to dust. You mean that you cannot produce any *great* results. You cannot move society as many do by their wealth or eloquence. You thus judge of influence by some popular commotion, but console yourself with the reflection that little things, multiplied by eternity, are more momentous than great things multiplied by time; that he who discharges his duties to those around him, exerts an influence which God approves, and which He will continue when many events which so figure in history shall be forgotten. One of our eminent statesmen once remarked that "picayune compliments" went further than "great kindnesses." In like manner, numerous picayune duties are more influential than the doing of some great thing at occasional intervals; for an

interval must elapse, otherwise, in *public* estimation, the event will not be great. It may be, however, that duties apparently so trifling may arrest more attention than you suppose. Angels may be watching every step of your Christian course with intense solicitude. Whether this be so or not, God has given you influence, and objects on which to exercise it. He notices every act, and you are pleasing him just as much as if you governed empires or moulded senates. Ever bear in mind that your influence is eternal; you shall kindle a light that will shine either as stars, or as brands of eternal burning.

A little particle of rain
 That from a passing cloud descended,
 Was heard thus idly to complain—
 “My brief existence now is ended:
 Outcast alike of earth and sky,
 Useless to live, unknown to die.”

It chanced to fall into the sea,
 And there an open shell received it;
 And after years how rich was he
 Who from its prison-house relieved it:
 That drop of rain had formed a gem
 To deck a monarch's diadem.

INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE.—Let us suppose the existence of an island where, fire being extinguished, the people had to pass their days in cold and nights in darkness. A benevolent person comes with a torch and offers light to any one who wishes it, enjoining only that those persons so blessed should take *their* torches into at least two darkened dwellings. It would not be long before all the island would have light, the progression being 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc. Now this is precisely the position the Christian holds in reference to this darkened world. He is to let his light so shine that

others may not only see, but kindle at his flame. He is never to cease his labors until (not merely two but) all around him experience heaven's blessings. And so each one thus blessed would become the centre of innumerable rays. Were such a system carried out, the world would soon have no dark spots, but as it is, there are only a few *bright* ones. And why so? There is an evil spirit, whose hatred against God's light is such, that he instigates his followers not merely to extinguish the light of God's truth in themselves, but to do the same to those around them; so that unless these centres of widening *evil* be resisted, the Church shall become like Pergamos or Thyatira, where the stork builds on the ruins of God's house, and the Turkish mosque takes the place of "Christ's holy temple." We see then around us two principles advancing with arithmetical precision, the one calculated to change earth to Heaven, the other to change earth to Hell.

What then shall we do? Stand by unconcerned? Hide our light under a bushel and so be responsible for the darkness such conduct occasions? say we *have* no influence? No; let us be up and doing. The drop of rain will teach us a lesson. The spark of fire will rebuke our lethargy. The grain of wheat will shame us to exertion. Let us if we would keep the light that now shines on us, remember that the condition of possession is its *distribution to others*. God gives us our daily light as we give to those who need our assistance. Says Dr. Arnold, "two or three decided persons steadily and quietly acting as they think right, will be a leaven to the whole mass, and the bad shall be left in that state, they shall meet hereafter,—a minority of unmixed evil."

XLI.

"NO POOR IN OUR CONGREGATION."—This was a remark made some years ago to the writer. No poor! when Christ says that they are His representatives, and what is done to them is done to Himself. *No poor there!* Where then was the exercise for that "charity without which all our doings are nothing worth?" The person making this thoughtless remark supposed it told well for the wealth and respectability of the people, but to myself it seemed like the announcement of a catastrophe; and, so far from exhibiting a state of prosperity, it showed the deepest destitution. It was the Church of Laodicea, in the 19th century, a Church which thought itself rich, when, in fact, it was poor, blind and naked; "*no poor there,*" why, *spiritual* poverty had clustered there and infected every member! Ah! how mistaken are they who think that the strength of a Church is in its *riches*. Such a mistake did the emperor Decius make, when he demanded of Bishop Ambrose his Church's treasures. The Bishop asked a day's delay, and at the time appointed introduced him to the Church, where was assembled the Church's armament; the poor, blind, lame, and diseased beneficiaries. These were the Church's treasure, for the Church that so "considered the poor and needy will be delivered in the time of trouble." "But, in a *temporal* point of view, is not a Church of rich persons best for the Church's support?" We by no means assent to this. We believe that the stream made up of many small contributions is deeper and more beneficial than the cataract which leaps from crag to crag, and then dissipates in spray. We believe that if we want a reward from God in this world, we are not to call merely the rich, for they can recompense us again, but we are to call the *poor*, and their paymaster will Himself see that their debt is paid. We are of opinion, that the widow's mites were more effectual toward

sustaining the temple than the larger gifts of plenty. But let us not forget that if we would reach to the dignity of the widow's mite, we must first descend to the widow's self-denial. A poor "will" is vastly more productive than a rich "way." And no poverty is so deep as his who, having abilities, starves the soul, by withholding it from deeds of benevolence. Such a one is in every sense the literal miser, who demands our compassion and our prayers.

THE POOR OF CHRIST.

FROM CHRISTIAN LYRICS.

How highly honoured, Lord, are they
Who wait upon Thy poor ;
Who serve their Maker day by day,
Within the cottage door ;
Who aid the widow's portion scant,
And feed and comfort those
That image, in their grief and want,
"The Man of many woes."

For Scripture saith, the poor and sad
Are types of God the Son ;
That He who makes their bosoms glad,
Makes glad the Holy One ;
That when we tend the sick, and feed
The hungry at our board,
We minister to JESUS' need,
And serve our blessed Lord.

Then should not Christian's eye behold
The low, with reverence meet,
And lay their silver and their gold
Right joyful at their feet ;
And open wide, with ready hands,
The hospitable door,
When JESUS CHRIST before them stands
In person of his Poor ?

Yea, come, ye blessed of the Lord,
Afflicted upon earth !
Receive the best I can afford,
And sanctify my hearth :
For JESUS' love, my cup partake—
Your prayers are all I claim ;
Eat of my bread, for JESUS' sake,
And bless me, in His name.

XLII.

“I DO NOT FEEL AN INTEREST IN THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL,”
—says an Episcopalian, who accordingly sends his children
to another day-school. A Churchman, and yet not be in-
terested in a Church school, to the establishment and main-
tenance of which his minister has devoted so much anxiety !
How is this ? Perhaps the other school is the cheapest, and
certainly, if education for your children at the least cost be
the object, the Public School is best ; or if you design merely
to prepare your child for successful business, that is the place.
There are, however, some singular people who have different
views, and who do sustain their own Church schools. The
Romanist system is well known ; but besides this, the
German Reformed Church, at their last General Synod, re-
commended such a school in every one of their congregations.
The Methodists also have academies and colleges under their
especial charge ; so that this singularity is by no means con-
fined to Episcopalians. Yes ; there are *some* parents who
act on the belief, that their children have souls to be saved, as
well as bodies to be cared for ; who feel that God holds them
responsible for “training their young in the way they should
go ;” who think, with Judge Erskine, of England, in his
charge to the Jury, that “it is found by experience that mere
education, unaccompanied with instilling sound religious prin-
ciples, did not tend to lessen crime.” Such parents, regard-

ing any training that does not contemplate eternity, as essentially defective, send their children to a Church school where a judgment day may be taught without offence; where the Bible and the Catechism are learned without disturbance; where prayer is made to Him "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy;" and where the minister of Christ can enter without intrusion. "To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," is not only a duty for yourself, but for your *children* also. Such a course will be found, even in a temporal point of view, the best; for, things which at the beginning are cheap, are not always the cheapest in the end. And this is particularly true of a Christless education.

A Church school *may* cost more than another, though such is by no means always the case. Supposing, however, that it be so in this instance, what are a few dollars compared with the manners which your child is forming for life; the intimacies which mould its character, and above all, the principles of conduct which determine individual, domestic and eternal felicity? If you desire to improve your child's *health*, you would send it to a place where the air is purest. If you would improve your child's *morals*, you will send it where an atmosphere of morality prevails; and no morality can exist independent of religion. No school-room is fit for a Christian's child, where Christ's name is spoken only in a whisper. By sending your child to a Church school, you do not necessarily save its soul, but you do your part in placing it where it may learn reverence to God, justice to neighbors, and obedience to yourself. The instructions of the Sunday School, now so thwarted by the influence of day-schools, would then be deepened by the teachings of the whole week. And you might reasonably expect that through the combined instrumentality of your minister, teacher, and yourself, your child would exhibit a dutiful conduct at home, and thus be a blessing to its parents and all its connections.

ENGLISH PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.—The Rev. Mr. Jackson, of Norfolk, Va., thus writes, from England :—

“In every Parish visited, the Parochial schools appear to be the object of the liveliest interest and solicitude to the clergy. Connected with each church, I have generally found three schools, one for boys, one for girls, and one for infant children of both sexes, numbering all together from 100 to 200 children, in some cases as high as 500 and even 1,000. The whole system of moral, religious and intellectual training is one which must excite admiration in every beholder. And happy must be the fruits which will appear in the generations following.

“Besides these schools, it is no unusual thing to see one or more of 30, 40, or 50 children, established and sustained by the benevolence of some individual member of the Church, and under his personal supervision,—so that it does really seem that England’s Church is bending all her energies upon the moral and intellectual improvement of the poor, and rapidly does the Church advance under all these noble efforts of her children, and the wretched and degraded, in many a hitherto neglected hamlet, may now be seen crowding to the House of God.”

XLIII.

“I FORGOT THE VESTRY MEETING.”—A sad forgetfulness, for the Vestry do not meet very often, and your absence may have prevented a quorum to transact business, and thus the Church affairs are neglected. A single adjournment, under such circumstances, sets a bad example to the Vestrymen who *have* taken some pains to be present, and who may not take the same trouble again. Moreover, it shows a want of interest in the Church, which has its effect on the other Vestrymen, and also on the congregation, who, seeing the *Vestry* negligent, take less interest in Church affairs than they other-

wise would. Some Churches may be so prosperous as to require very few meetings of the Vestry; the people may be so willing for every good work, that its affairs can be managed by the Treasurer alone; but most Churches require the attention of every Vestryman to their financial affairs, and when this attention, to which they are solemnly pledged, is forgotten, the Church-building begins to decay, and the minister suffers from the non-payment of his salary. This last result is particularly hard: for, as the spiritual interests of the congregation engage all his time, the Church has relieved him from the care of his support by committing it to the Vestry, and all he asks is that he may receive such a salary as will enable him to be Christ's minister without embarrassment. What cruelty then, when he has done *his* part, for Vestrymen to neglect theirs. This is Pharaoh's demand of the usual tale of bricks without the requisite straw. It is this which disturbs him with cares that do not properly belong to him;—which injures his usefulness; subjects him to the degradation of debt; exposes his family to wants which are not the less real for being *concealed*, and which often bring him to a premature grave. He may not be so acceptable as formerly, but is there not a cause? Your neglect may have depressed his spirits. Try what encouragement, or rather justice, will do. Support him by your attendance at the Vestry meeting. Do not absent yourself from Church for any slight cause, and thus you will cheer him to exertion; for, having feelings as other men, as he is depressed by injustice, so is he animated by co-operation.

It is true that Vestrymen cannot *compel* the congregation to do their duty, but they can bring their influence and example to bear, and thus do good. They can attend Church themselves; they can induce others to come; they can procure subscriptions, or rent seats, and in many other things impracticable for their *minister*, they can promote the Church's welfare. An active harmonious Vestry are a blessing to any

congregation, while an inactive, divided Vestry will directly throw the Church's temporal, and *indirectly* its spiritual affairs, into confusion. In most cases, that is the cause why the minister seeks some other field of labor, or enters upon some other occupation for his support. The Church affairs demand pressing attention. Your *own* spiritual health requires exertion in some good work. What an opportunity is then offered for a Vestryman to do good to others and to himself. Even though he receive no pecuniary reward for such labor, he will not be forgotten by Him who says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

Necessary as an active Vestryman is, he is not more so than another important officer,—*A Prompt Treasurer*. "One of the most useful men in any Church or Society, as many know by experience, is a prompt gentlemanly Treasurer. On the appointed days, and perhaps on the same hour in those days, he makes his appearance at the Pastor's house, and the Pastor sees in him, as it were, a whole congregation earnest to fulfil their obligations to their minister. The bonds of love, through a delicate sense of obligation and gratitude, insensibly grow stronger in the Pastor's heart. He respects his people more. He is admonished and quickened in his duties. But when the Treasurer comes far behind his time and then pays only a small part of the arrears, and dolefully tells the minister that the Society is very poor, and that they find it exceedingly difficult to pay his salary, then the minister and his wife have long and sad conferences about their straitened circumstances. They meditate an encroachment upon the little property a relative has left her, the knowledge of which is the reason felt or assigned by some parishioners for not paying their dues. From the experience which brethren in the ministry have related, it may be confidently asserted, that if there is any cruelty and any suffering, peculiarly exquisite and keen, it may be found in the

treatment of a sensitive pastor, by an unfaithful people, and in his secret sorrows on account of it.

"All men love to be paid promptly. It is a universal truth that 'short reckonings make long friends.' You never pay money to a tradesman or laborer promptly and willingly without putting him in a good humor. How freely he speaks of the weather, inquires as to the health of your family, indulges his innocent wit, smiles, thanks you, and makes you feel you are one of his benefactors or friends."*

XLIV.

"ONLY PRAYERS."—And accordingly some never go to Church except when there is a sermon, and sometimes not then, because it is too long. "*Only* prayers!" But does not CHRIST say that His house "is the house of prayer?"—a place where prayer not only is made, but answered? And have we not the example of Apostles for going up to the Temple to pray? What are those prayers that they are so neglected? They are not in a foreign language; nor does the minister omit any thing essential: on the contrary, they comprise every thing necessary to public devotion, for the people have met together "to render thanks for the great benefits received at God's hand, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His most Holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul." Now one would think that if all this were only done sincerely, a great deal would be accomplished. Why even Gurney, the Quaker, said, he "derived the greatest benefit from an attendance on the week meetings," (silent.) And Archbishop Leighton says, in his charge to the Clergy, 1662, "Whatsoever ministers do, they should beware of returning to their long expositions, besides the sermon, at one and the

* Banner of the Cross, 1847.

same meeting ; which, beside the tediousness and other inconvenience, is apt to foment in people's minds the foolish prejudice and proud disdain they have taken against the Scriptures read without a superadded discourse ; in which conceit, for all their zeal against Popery, they seem to be too much of the Romish opinion, as accounting the Holy Scriptures in themselves as so obscure that it is some way dangerous, or at least altogether unprofitable, to intrust the common people either with reading or hearing any part of them at any time, unless they be backed with continual expositions." Truly, if those who object to "only prayers," would only make the experiment of entering more fully into their spirit, every objection would be silenced by their beauty.

Dr. Johnson said the reason why he attended week-day prayers was, that so few being present, his presence was more serviceable than on other occasions of worship ; but, for this reason of the doctor's, most persons stay away.

XLV.

"I DO NOT LIKE TO BEGIN FAMILY PRAYER."—But you should endeavor to *overcome* any dislike which prevents you from undertaking so beneficial a duty ; and, having begun, you will find a greater facility, and more domestic happiness in its performance. The Church has provided a beautiful form of morning and evening family prayer, so that it is not necessary to have any peculiar "gift" in this respect, which many apparently are waiting for. The practice of family prayer has now become a kind of common law in the Church, independent of positive requirement. *Men* frequently have it not in their power to attend the Church's week-day service ; but they can, by a little exertion, always have prayer in the family, which is attended with so much benefit to parents, children, servants, and "the stranger that is within thy gates,"

that some one says, "A house without such prayer is roofless." A short chapter of Scripture, and, if practicable, the singing of a psalm or hymn, would add greatly to the blessed influence on the circle within which your happiness is enclosed. A recent traveller says, that in nearly every respectable *English* family such prayer is observed: and why is it not so with us?

There is not on earth a scene more interesting than a family thus bending before the God of heaven;—a collection of dependent beings, with tender feelings, with lively sympathies, with common hopes, fears, joys, blending their bliss and their woes together, and presenting them all to the King of kings, and the Great Father of all the families of mankind. There is not on earth a man that is more to be venerated, or that will be more venerated, than the father who thus ministers at the family altar. No other man, like that father, so reaches all the sources of human action, or so gently controls the powers, yielding in their first years, and following the direction of his moulding hand, that are soon to control all that is tender and sacred in the interest of the church and state. No Solon or Lycurgus is laying the foundation of codes of laws so deep, or taking so fast a hold on all that is to affect the present or future destiny of man. We love, therefore, to look at such venerable locks, and to contemplate these ministers of God who stand between the rising generation,—feeble, helpless, and exposed to a thousand perils,—and the Eternal Parent of all. They stand between the past and the coming age,—remnants of the one, and lights to the other; binding the past with that which is to come; living lights of experience to guide the footsteps of the ignorant and erring; to illuminate the coming generation;—to obtain for it blessings by counsel and prayer, and then to die. And if the earth contains, amid its desolation, one spot of green on which the eye of God reposes with peculiar pleasure, it is the collected group, with the eye of the father raised to heaven, and the voice of faith and

prayer commending the little worshippers to the protecting care of Him who never slumbers nor sleeps.

The inimitable language of Burns, on this subject, is not fiction. In hundreds of families you might witness all that is pure and sublime in the scene contemplated by the Scottish bard :

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim ;
Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name :
Or noble Elgin beats the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickled ears no heart-felt rapture raise ;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head ;
How his first followers and servants sped ;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land ;
How he who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by heaven's
command.

Then kneeling down, to heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays ;

Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear;
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XLVI.

"I MUST GO TO THE SOCIETY."—And for that purpose must leave the Church or some Church engagement to go to *the* Society. Why, it has always been thought among Christians that CHRIST's Church was *the* Society, and consequently, that all other associations were as inferior to the Church as the perishing body is to the undying soul. But you *must* and you *will* go; and to that Society you give that time, thought, means, influence, which legitimately belong to the Church, "the bride of CHRIST." And hence, on week days, the Church meeting numbers some six men, while *the* Society numbers its hundreds in procession, and brings at one meeting such crowds as enter into no Church. If any member of the Church should read this, he is requested to consider the result if the Church received as much attention as her more successful human rivals. Would not the Church flourish *as* that rival; and would not your own piety greatly increase? The further inquiry is respectfully made, "whether it be right, in God's sight, to allow any such institution to take that place in your heart which belongs to CHRIST and His Church?" It is on this account that God's ministers must complain with Jeremiah, "The ways of Zion mourn, because none come to her solemn feasts." *

* The above remarks were written before the formation of Church Brotherhoods, and were not intended to refer to them.

XLVII.

"TOO MANY BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS ALREADY."—But what kind of books? Historical and biographical, travels and school books; novels in abundance. But how many *religious* books have you? Do you expend ten dollars a year in this way? Perhaps among all your purchases not one of a religious character has lately been procured. A good book is a good friend, and exercises a powerful influence on the character, preserving, as in a phial, the best thoughts of the best men. You yourself may be so engaged in business as not to have much leisure, but your *family* will read; and if you do not furnish them with books of a good character, *they* will read such as indispose them for the duties of life, or dispose them for the follies and vices which so abound. A good book is then not only an antidote for idleness, but it supplies the place of reading positively injurious. It introduces the reader to the best thoughts of the best men, and furnishes a delightful occupation in many hours which otherwise might be thrown away; for, according to Fenelon, "Disquiet which preys on other men is unknown to those fond of reading."

You have *old* religious books; but you must have new also, to prevent the others from moulding in the memory. You must have such as meet the wants of the age, and are adapted to the changes of society. Hence new books are generally preferred, and unless religious truth be presented to the young in an attractive garb, for the most part it will not be read. You are careful in introducing a stranger to your family: be equally so as to the *books* you introduce, that they may be such as will leave a blessing and not a curse behind. Nor can the usual plea of expense be alleged as an excuse, for such is the facility for printing, that books can now be bought at one half of their former cost. A whole library, containing one hundred volumes, can be obtained for ten dollars; and it

is difficult to see how such a sum could accomplish more good. If you, as a Christian parent, wish your children to be intelligent Christians, renew your supply of proper books, and you shall find the investment cheap. A thought contained therein may, in its influence on your family, save many hours of woe. An old writer says, that "Any person who hoards up his money, instead of laying it out in such a charity, should be condemned to the mines."

The same remarks apply to a *religious paper*, only that the expense is still less; being three, two, and even one dollar a year for a paper which will visit you weekly, and bring to your house some hundred different articles, each containing a good thought. You will see how your Heavenly Father governs the world, and particularly His Church: what the missionary is doing,—what other Christian bodies are engaged in. You will meet with gems of thought in prose and poetry; extracts from the best writings; encouragements to good and warnings against evil, with examples of both. And thus you will sustain an agency which, at present, is indispensable to our Church's due success. The dearest paper is cheap indeed when we consider the influence of fifty-two such in a year, read as they are by all the family. Episcopalians, though as a body inferior to none in intelligence, are greatly deficient in this respect, for while nearly every Methodist takes his Church paper, whole congregations of ours take scarcely one. If you have not done so before, subscribe to one now. (Of course you will punctually pay for it, otherwise it would not be to you a *religious paper*.) You shall find it a corrector not only of other papers filled with idle tales, but also a disinfectant of those crimes and advertising impurities which are in papers generally respectable, the reading of which produces a contagious familiarity with vice. Your family will read *some* papers: which kind do you choose? Alexander Knox, in writing to Bishop Jebb, says, "whatever you save do not save in *Reviews*. The receiving

of these has something exhilarating. They bring in news to me from the mental and moral world. I see in them what is going on, and from three different classes of monthlies some satisfactory inference may be made of the stations which minds are keeping or the changes they are undergoing." Said Daniel Webster, "If religious *books* are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, and the people do not become religious, I do not know what is to become of us as a nation."

XLVIII.

"I CAN FORGIVE BUT NOT FORGET."—But have you really tried to forget, or do you still dwell on the subject, talk of it, establish a non-intercourse, and withdraw even the smile of recognition from your former friend? If so, you do not forget because you *will* not. Forgetfulness is not so difficult as you imagine; witness the grief at the death of a relative, or the facility with which the most solemn promises to God are forgotten. If you earnestly tried; nay, if you would only let the subject alone, perhaps in a year you would not only have forgotten the injury, but the quarrel that followed it.

But what, after all, is this great injury which is beyond your ability to forget it? Perhaps you were yourself a little in the wrong, or perhaps the tale-bearer did not tell *exactly* what was said or done at which you took such exception, or perhaps you are rather disposed to irritability, like a match which requires only the least rubbing for a flare-up. But no: "*You* have been perfectly innocent in the transaction, and the other party altogether in the wrong;" then yours should be the anger of a good man, which resembles the flinty spark, hard to excite and immediately extinguished. As a Christian, you should be glad to exercise that forgiving "charity without which all our doings are nothing worth," and the Lord's Prayer a curse. You have the opportunity of forgiving your

debtor the hundred pence, particularly as you expect to be forgiven your debt to God of ten thousand talents. You can now pray *heartily* "for your enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, that God would change their hearts."

You do not try to forget, because you do not try to *forgive*; and thus you continue in a state displeasing to God, disgusting to yourself, grievous to your friends, injurious to piety, and a hindrance to every good enterprise; for nothing impedes the Church's progress more than dissension among its ministers. It is not required that others be in charity with you, but that you be in charity with them. Try again to forget it, and for this purpose engage in some good work, and thus your thoughts will not have leisure to prey on your troubles; press forward, and you will soon forget the painful past. Be sufficiently a Christian to soar above such things, leaving them to those who are animated by no better motives, who have no such objects of importance.

It is an interesting inquiry what the effect upon the Church would be, if the attention given to *dissensions* in a congregation were expended in advancing its interests: what energy, life, and success, instead of the present insensibility to the Church's most pressing demands!

"A man strikes me with a sword, and inflicts a wound. Suppose instead of binding up the wound, I am showing it to everybody; and after it has been bound up, I am taking off the bandage continually and examining the depth of the wound and causing it to fester, till my limb becomes greatly inflamed, and my general health is materially affected; is there a person in the world that would not call me a fool? Now such a fool is he, who, by dwelling upon little injuries or insults, or provocations, causes them to agitate and inflame his mind. How much better were it to put a bandage over the wound, and never look at it again."

“When on the fragrant sandal tree
The woodman’s axe descends,
And she who bloomed so beautifully
Beneath the keen stroke bends—
E’en on the edge that brought her death,
Dying she breathes her sweetest breath—
As if to token in her fall
Peace to her foes and love to all.
How hardly man this lesson learns,
To smile and bless the hand that spurns:
To see the blow and feel the pain,
But render only love again.
This spirit ne’er was given on earth—
One had it: He of heavenly birth.
Reviled, rejected, and betrayed,
No curse He breathed, no plaint He made;
But when in death’s deep pang He sighed,
Prayed for His murderers and died.”

XLIX.

“HE WAS NO ONE’S ENEMY BUT HIS OWN.”—He must then have had a singular dislike to himself, to treat all others so much better than himself: but is it true that he injured only himself? Did his conduct give his family no trouble? Was not his example pernicious to the welfare of society? Alas! he wasted his own life in self-indulgence, at the expense of the feelings, the reputation, and sometimes the very comforts, of those depending on him: and yet, “he was no one’s enemy but his own!” But was he honest towards his Maker, Redeemer, Sanctifier? Did he meet His claims? Oh no! he could lavish his affections on earthly benefactors, and yet refuse gratitude to Him who gave him all he ever had. He could be honest towards his neighbor, and why did he not *extend* that honesty towards one nearer than a neighbor? Why was he not honest towards himself, instead of deceiving

his heart with wretched excuses? Alas! it was truly asked by a little girl, on reading the epitaphs in a burial-ground, "Father, where are the *sinner*s buried?" And it has been as truly suggested by some one, "That if many persons could rise to life again, (the darkness of delusion being *now* scattered,) they would imagine, from the wrong description of character, that they had been laid in the wrong grave:" for only of the *righteous* can it be said, "He has exchanged the sorrows of earth for the felicities of heaven."

L.

"SEND FOR THE MINISTER."—A very proper message, for a minister cannot possibly know who are sick in his congregation without being told of it, as he has not the attribute either of omnipresence or omniscience, which belong to the Almighty alone. And hence the unreasonableness of those who will not send, and then are angry that the minister does not come. But in this case he *was* sent for, but not, alas! until his visit was perfectly useless; when the physician had given up his patient, and a few hours closed a life of impenitence. How fatal the mistake, to think that the minister can *then* do any good! But most frequently is he then sent for, and what is the result? He explains the necessity of repentance, prays, and takes his leave. The sick man expresses resignation to that death which he cannot avoid; breathes a prayer, perhaps the first for years, hopes God will forgive him, and then begs his friends to meet him in heaven,—and they think that all is well. But why such hopes are entertained is inexplicable, except on the ground of that self-delusion which is so general. The man has, through life, made his bosom an asylum for legions of self-deceptions, and they do not forsake him in his dying hour. Health was the season for repentance, but to converse with the minister *then* was never thought of; indeed the man scarcely ever heard the minister in public. Even

when sickness *commenced*, religion was not thought of, but as life must be surrendered in a short time, the messenger comes, breathless, for the man of God.

What strange ideas of repentance such a person must have, when this is supposed to be a genuine instance of it! and how dangerous such a supposition to the surviving impenitent!

LI.

“THEY ARE SO DISTANT.”—The members of the Church unhappily are too much so in their conduct towards each other. They say they believe “in the communion of Saints,” without trying to realize sufficiently what they say. Sometimes, however, the fault is with the complainers, who mistakingly expect that, immediately after their membership, a general call shall be made to see them. Intimacy, even in the Church, must be gradual, resulting from knowledge of the stranger’s character, and for that, some time must necessarily be allowed, otherwise, there might be introduced one who would change the harmony that exists into interminable dissensions. A quiet person will have no difficulty in making acquaintances. The Church too much needs such, to let them be neglected. But such a person is sometimes as distant from the other Church members as they are from her, and they complain of *her* distance as much as she does of theirs. She must not expect to receive all the visiting without returns. Let her be only accessible, ready to forbear, unruffled by every cross event, and the distance of which she complains will be found much less than she supposed: imaginary coldness will yield to cordial welcome. For the encouragement of sociability among Church members, it should be known, that such friendships springing from a common love to Christ, are superior in permanency to any other, and hence, all proper associations in the Church should be promoted, not

only for some direct object, for but that which is more important, the bringing of Church members together. The distance we attribute to others, is often that beam in our own eye which prevents our seeing clearly the mote in our brother's eye.

LII.

"YOU HAVE NO PROVISION FOR REVIVALS."—This depends on what is meant by Revivals. We do not provide for that "dead machinery of new measures professedly for 'the getting up of Revivals in religion' which, in practice, have so profanely dispensed with the influences of the Holy Spirit in the conviction and conversion of sinners; which, under the name of promoting a more spiritual and simple religion have, in the places where they are most used, introduced the hardest and worst, because the most spiritually pretending of all formality; which, in a word, have confessedly overspread many large portions of our country with spiritual delusion and paralysis." This testimony of Bishop Mellvaine, seems to be fully corroborated by the "*New York Christian Advocate and Journal*," a leading Methodist paper, which thus speaks:—"It cannot be denied that the system of recruiting our Church by Revivals, has been seriously abused, and that the faith of our preachers and people, in the benefits of such religious excitements, has been very much shaken. The plan of forcing a periodical excitement by the aid of professed agitators or Revivalists, has been fraught with consequences disastrous to the Church. Machine-made converts, were found to have a very ephemeral life, and the successful labors of the reviver to fill the classes of probationers, were generally followed by the more laborious and ungrateful efforts of regular preachers, to rid them of careless and irreligious members." In such Revivals, our Church does not confide, but we *do* provide for Revivals as thus defined in the *Episcopal Recorder* of August 10, 1844.

“A Revival of religion, we understand to be those deepened spiritual impressions which are produced by bringing the great truths of the Gospel to bear strongly on the hearts and consciences of men. And the only legitimate means for the production of such impressions are those that resolve themselves into the application of truth. But has our prayer book made no such arrangements as this? Do not our morning and evening services present all the most precious and saving doctrines of religion in a devotional, as the articles in a didactic form. And is this nothing? Must religious truth lose its effect when appearing in the prayer book? If ever there was on earth a complete and beautiful system of Gospel instruction, presenting in their connection the nativity, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection and ascension of our Lord: the Atonement and Trinity, etc., it will be found in the arrangement of the Calendar of the Protestant Episcopal Church. As to ‘*protracted meetings*,’ if there be any thing in these promotive of Revivals, we insist upon it that we are in this respect at least considerably in advance of our objecting brethren. Their Church permits them, while by ours they are positively enjoined. They have their annual *four* days’ meeting, and we have ours of *forty* days. They make provision for prayers and preaching, while we add to these *fasting* also. A means which does not appear to be in very high repute with some of the zealous champions of Revivals, and equally zealous impugnors of the Liturgy.”

LIII.

“WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH THE CITY MISSION?”—What have you to do with our *city*? You are surrounded by thousands of “neighbors” who are living as heathen in a Christian land. You are called upon by your Redeemer to give as freely as you have received, and to show your esti-

mate for your own undying soul by caring for the souls of others. Around you are thousands of children who, in a few years will, if left to themselves, be disturbers of the community, and be destined for the alms-house or jail, but who, if now cared for, may become blessings to society. There are already indications of riot and disturbance around you, which tend to render property and life insecure, and which are calculated to tarnish the reputation of your city. Your church has heretofore done almost nothing, having been far behind others which have not been blest with so much wealth and influence. Do you ask, then, what you "have to do with City Missions?" You a citizen, Christian, churchman, man of property! Why, you have the *same* to do, as if you stood on a river's brink and saw a neighbor drowning, or as if you had a specific for a contagious disease under which many around were suffering. Rev. Mr. Syle said, that "he had stood by and seen a Chinese idolater striking his head nine times on the ground before a block of wood, but this sight did not affect him so much as the wickedness of Christian heathen,—persons living within sound of a church-going bell, with all the ignorance of an idolater, and all the responsibility of the Christian." How does such a sight affect *you*?—You, who by your baptism have been ordained to do to others as you would they should do to you?

"WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME TO DO?"—We reply, that if you have any interest in this cause, *show* it by *acting*. You are not called, perhaps, to preach, and to administer the sacraments, but in your sphere you are still a missionary, sent by God to bless man, as He sends all His blessings not directly, but through agents appointed for that purpose.

You may be able to visit the missionary stations, and there encourage weak hands by teaching the Sunday class, and staying to make the little congregation *one* larger. You may contribute your influence and counsel, to sustain the worn

missionary in a work which demands the greatest wisdom, patience, and piety. You can, by your means, contribute to meet the wants of the city mission generally, and of some station in particular. And thus you may do yourself a greater benefit than if you adhered exclusively to your present arrangements. And as the scattering of the disciples, on account of St. Stephen's death, caused the Gospel to be preached in other places besides Jerusalem, so let *principle* induce *you* to visit those quarters where "the harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few."

CITY MISSIONS BECOME FOREIGN.—The various arguments in behalf of city missions may strike different minds with various degrees of force. There is one view, however, calculated to influence the most careless, viz.: that cities are not only the source of much crime in themselves, but our American cities are receiving a constantly increasing foreign population, much of which is infidel, much vicious, and a very small part religiously disposed. And, sad to say, owing to the breaking up of pious associations, the foreign religious element becomes weakened, and at last assimilated to the irreligion around. We have known emigrants who never missed attendance on their parish church, who brought with them the Bible or Prayer Book from their pastor, but who now never enter the house of God. With such an increasing foreign population what are we to do? We impose a quarantine on the infectious *vessel*, and shall we see a moral miasma in our midst and do nothing? Verily we shall have our reward! We boast much of the permanency of our free institutions, but let us not forget the assertion of General Cass, "that they cannot continue unless based on religion." And let us not forget that our government must reflect not only the will but the character of the people; and if that character become demoralized our freedom departs. "Righteousness exalteth a nation," and therefore it is the true *patriot's* duty to dis-

seminate righteousness among the crowds coming to our shores. If it be the obligation of every Christian to go himself directly, or through others, "into all the world," how increased is the obligation when "all the world" seems to be coming to our Atlantic and Pacific coasts?

THE LOST FOUND.

Lo! a servant of the Lord,
 Whilst wandering to and fro,
Feeding—clothing—teaching—blessing
 The helpless here below,
In a breadless, bedless hovel,
 Not on a barren wild,
But in a wealthy city, found
 A little starving child.

"Go, bring thy parents hither, boy,"
 The good man cried—anon
The child turn'd up a face, to see
 Would melt a heart of stone:
"Alas! I have no parents, sir,"
 The little trembler cried;
"For my poor mother broke her heart
 The day my father died."

Then said this servant of the Lord,
 "Come from the cruel cold,
Poor little, shivering, shorn lamb, -
 Into our Christian fold.
We'll feed thee—clothe thee—teach thee
 To read, to work, to pray;
And we will make thee sure, poor boy,
 Of three good meals a day."

Oh! had you seen the flush of joy
 That brightened o'er the cheek
Of that poor starving orphan boy,
 When, with a painful shriek,

He shouted, "Tell me, do I dream—
Or did you really say,
Kind sir, that you would make me sure
Of three good meals a-day?

"I care not how the winds may blow,
Or how the rains may beat;
I care not though the cruel frost
Should bite my naked feet;
Again upon the hard cold earth
My weary head I'll lay,
Unmurmuring, if you make me sure
Of three good meals a-day."

Think, think of this, ye ladies fine—
Of this, brave gentlemen;
I do not wish the gall of blame
To stain my humble pen;
But, oh! think of the poor, and know,
The treasures of the skies
Are Widows' mites, and Pity's tears,
And Mercy' gentle sighs.

When o'er the face of nature sweeps
The wintry winds so wild,
When ye are warmly clad, O think
Upon the outcast child!
When tables groan, then think upon
The heart that breaks for bread;
And when the blazing faggots burn,
Think of the houseless head.

LIV.

“OUR OWN CHURCH IS IN DEBT.”—This excuse is frequently used, when any application is made for assistance; and it is supposed to be quite satisfactory. Indeed the minister himself often fears to propose some benevolent object, lest his appeal meet with this chilling plea. A church-debt palsies exertion, frustrates the attempt to do good, and is so dishonoring to God and injurious to man, that immediate steps should be taken for its payment; for God’s *full* blessing cannot be expected, until this incubus is removed from the congregation. And is it not a shame that God’s Holy Temple should be liable to the claim of the creditor, when many of the surrounding dwellings are not only free from debt, but furnished with the most costly conveniences? God denounces “Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.”

But is it possible to remove a debt so large? Yes, it may be done by perseverance and united effort. Let the total amount be distributed in two, three, or four years; then subdivide these annual payments by the number of months in the year; let all the congregation subscribe monthly; appoint faithful persons to collect these subscriptions; and place them on the altar on some appointed Sundays, and the result is reached. What was formidable in the total, is manageable in detail; the church is free. The house belongs to God. The congregation have been strengthened by the effort. The minister is relieved from a load of anxiety; and benevolence, hitherto choked, now springs up with a plenteous harvest.

This plan of a direct gift to God has been successfully tried, while many other plans, more promising, fail in that regard to His favor, "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy." Let then all who love the church, old and young, rich and poor, give from their self-denial. Let it be done at once; for when delayed the difficulty increases, while the ability of the congregation lessens through chronic indisposition. Let it be done vigorously; grasp the nettle firmly, and you do not feel the pain which follows the timid touch.

"Great works," says a learned writer, "are done not by strength but by perseverance:" this it is that levels mountains and accomplishes the circuit of the globe; and it is this which would pay the debt of all our churches. And what a blessing, if the announcement were made, that all our churches belonged to God, owing no man anything but love for his salvation! Captive Zion would take her harp from the willows, and sing unto the Lord a new song; "and God, even our own God, would give us His blessing."

A king was once distressed by the thought that the Ark of God dwelt in curtains, while himself dwelt in a house of cedar. He would not give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, until he found out a place for the temple of the Lord; and he turned from the cares of state, to pray that the walls of Jérusalem might be built. Supposing, however, that the temple had been built, but mortgaged to the Tyrians, would that king's prayers and exertions have been less fervent, or would his sleep have been calm, until the last shekel of that mortgage had been paid? No: but on its being paid, he would have rejoiced as on the day when the ark was brought to Jerusalem. This privilege of a king belongs also to the poorest widow of the congregation. It is an honor which should not be monopolized by a few, but shared by all; for, *all* may now sing.

Arise, O Lord! and now possess
Thy constant place of rest:
Be that not only with Thy ark,
But with Thy presence, blest!

A presence, more glorious than that which hallowed the first temple of Solomon or the second of Zerubbabel.

Then, brethren, for the sake of Christ and His Church, give liberally, and remove the burden of these Church debts. There are many of you who could yearly give hundreds to this noble object. It would be a blessing to yourselves and to your families. Why hoard money to inflame pride and avarice, or to encircle with gilded temptations those children you are to train for heaven? Why take away the chief stimulus to their industry and self-reliance? Why heap up fortunes to be sunk at death? Was our Saviour mistaken when He uttered the solemn warnings found in St. Matthew, xiii. 22; St. Mark, x. 23; and St. Luke, vi. 24? Alas! some seem to believe all God's word *except* these important truths; and when the light of eternity breaks upon them, will they not wish to return and make their wills over again? Oh, that some rays of that light would *now* show us that we are but stewards, and not the proprietors of anything but our sins!

LV.

"I HAVE NO VOICE."—Bishop Ravenscroft was on one occasion saying the Creed in church; but, finding that no one repeated it after him, he paused and expressed the hope that he was not the only one present who believed in God, the Father Almighty. A minister officiating now in some congregations might have the same reason to hope that all were not dumb excepting himself and the choir. The Church calls

on all to "come and sing unto the Lord;" and the invitation is accepted by a quartette and the organ.

"But I have no voice for singing." And have you no voice for *responding*? An ancient Father said, that the united Amen came up from the congregation as the voice of thunder; but now it sometimes requires a practised ear to detect any response whatever. Is it not strange, that those who *after* service speak so audibly to each other, who so freely express thanks to a fellow-man for the slightest favor, are dumb in the presence of their Father and their Friend?—have a voice for all others but for Him who for *them* was cradled in a manger and crucified on Calvary? Shall angels praise God for *man's* Saviour, and man himself be insensible? Let all those who have received no favor from God keep silence, but let those whom He daily crowns with mercy, to whom He gives the *power* of speech, use that speech in "setting forth His most worthy praise, and in asking those things requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul."

The Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church is confessedly excellent; but its excellence consists in its proper performance by minister and people. If, however, the congregation are silent when they should respond, the old reproach is revived that the Liturgy of the Church is her lethargy. The beautiful service seems cold and tedious; and the stranger departs with unfavorable impressions. The Church has been wounded in the house of her friends; they have praised the service, and yet have neglected its performance. They have awarded flattery instead of that simple justice which she asks. Were they only just in doing their part, the service would indeed have the same words, but a far different expression; beauties would then develop which now are hid. If all found room for Jesus in their praise, the humblest church would become the palace of a king; the Liturgy would be doubly dear to ourselves; and strangers

would be attracted, not by the report of others, but by what they themselves saw and heard.

There are many who *can* and yet do not sing, fearing to presume on the privileges of the choir; a fear, not warranted by the Rubric or by the Liturgy, nay *condemned* by the very title,—“The book of *common* prayer,”—common, both in prayer and praise. Had the Church given no directions on this subject, true devotional taste would greatly prefer the plainest tune sung with one accord, to the most elaborate performance of the few. One well versed in the human heart, and qualified to express an opinion, declared, “that the devotion in which every one took a share seemed so superior to that which was recited by musicians, as a lesson that they had learned by rote, that it gave the Scottish worship all the advantage of reality over acting.” May the time soon come when the same testimony shall be borne to the worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, whose service is *expressly* designed for all coming into the presence of their Lord and Maker.

In this design,
Let youths with maids,
And hoary heads
With children, join!

An Umbrella for a Raining Sunday;

OR,

THIRTY-FOUR GOOD REASONS WHY I ATTEND CHURCH ON SUNDAYS,
RAINY, SNOWY, MISTY, HOT.

1. Because God has blest the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it,—making no exception for rainy Sundays.

2. Because I expect my *Minister* to be there, and should be surprised if *he* were to stay at home for the weather.

3. Because, although he has been faithfully present through many storms, I see that his health is as good as mine, who have so frequently been absent.

4. Because my absence, for slight reasons, will lead him to *think* that there is some personal objection to *him*, when, perhaps, he is devoting all his energy to the salvation of his charge.

5. Because my non-attendance is calculated to paralyze his exertions, and lead him to suppose that his visits and sermons are useless.

6. Because, if his hands fall through weakness, I shall have great reason to blame myself, unless I sustain him by my prayers and presence, as I should do.

7. Because, in preaching the doctrines of Scripture, and enforcing the discipline of the Church, (to both of which he is solemnly pledged,) he has difficulties enough to encounter without *my* increasing their number.

8. Because God has blessed me with the means of obtaining such precautions against the weather, that I am in no *real* danger.

9. Because my presence is more needed on Sundays when there are few, than on those days when the church is crowded.

10. Because, by staying away, I *may* lose the sermon that would have done me great good ; and *shall* lose the prayers which invariably bring God's blessing on the true heart.

11. Because, whatever station I hold in the Church, my example must influence others : for if I stay away, why not they ?

12. Because, on any *important* business, bad weather does not keep me in the house ; and church attendance is, in *God's* sight, very important. (See Heb. x. 25.)

13. Because, among the crowds of pleasure-seekers, I see that no bad weather keeps the delicate female from the ball, the party, or the concert.

14. Because, among other blessings, such weather will show me on what foundation my faith is built. It will prove *how much* I love Christ ; for *true* love rarely fails to meet an appointment.

15. Because a fear that my clothes might suffer, shows that I think more of them than of that beauty of holiness which God so approves.

16. Because I am Christ's soldier, signed with His Cross ; and he is a poor soldier who retreats to his house because of a cloud.

17. Because those who stay from church because it is too warm, or too cold, or too rainy, frequently absent themselves even on *fair* Sundays. They *intended* to go to church last Sunday, but—

18. Because, though my excuses satisfy myself, they still must undergo God's scrutiny ; and I must be well grounded to bear that. (See St. Luke xiv. 16.)

19. Because the friends of God are so few in the world,

that the Church cannot afford to lose one. "Friends in *need* are friends indeed."

20. Because there is a *special* promise, where only two or three meet together, in God's name, he is in the midst of them.

21. Because absence from church, for reasons which would not keep me from going to buy a pencil on week days, must be discouraging to all true friends of the church, particularly its vestrymen and wardens.

22. Because the Church has great reason to complain, that when, on any excitement, there are scarcely seats for the people; when any change of weather occurs, there is scarcely people for seats.

"The friends that in her sunshine come,
When clouds arise, are flown."

23. Because an avoidable absence from church, is an infallible evidence of spiritual decay. Disciples first follow Christ at a distance, and then, like Peter, do not know him.

24. Because my faith is to be known by my self-denying good works, and not by the rise and fall of the thermometer.

25. Because, after all, I may find disagreeable Sundays blessings in disguise. At least, I sing—

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercies, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

26. Because the punctual attendance of another denomination on what I suppose a *defective* worship, is a call on me to be equally punctual on a service I believe to be *perfect*.

27. Because I think it very inconsistent to speak of our liturgy as so superior to any other mode of worship, and, for the slightest cause, absent myself from its performance.

28. Because my belief in the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy, demands from me an *apostolic attendance on its ministry*. And in those days, an Emperor's threats could not keep from worship, much less a lowering cloud or warm sun.

29. Because such yielding to surmountable difficulties prepares for yielding to those entirely *imaginary*, until thousands never enter a church, and yet think that they have good reasons for such neglect.

30. Because, if from fear of cold or heat I can neglect worship, the East Indian and the Laplander should *never* attend, and missionaries should be withdrawn from such unfavorable climes.

31. Because, so far from relaxing that diligent church attendance which marked the time of my confirmation, I should be *more* diligent, as I see the day approaching.

32. Because, by a suitable arrangement on Saturday, I shall be able to attend church without exhaustion; otherwise, my late work on Saturday night will be as great a sin as though I worked on Sunday itself.

33. Because, though I should lose some custom by an early closing of my business on Saturday night, I should cheerfully make such sacrifice, for the favor of God and the testimony of my conscience.

34. Because I know not how many more Sundays God may still vouchsafe me; and it would be a poor preparation for my first Sunday in Heaven, to have slighted my last Sunday on earth.

An empty Church Plate speaking for itself;

OR,

THIRTY-FIVE REASONS FOR CONTRIBUTING LIBERALLY TO THE CHURCH'S SUPPORT.

1. Because, by the very appointment of a Church to which all are obliged to belong, *all* are equally obliged to contribute to its maintenance according to their ability.

2. Because God has not left this in doubt, but, under both the Jewish and Christian dispensations, requires his people to "bring their gifts to the altar."

3. Because the Church herself demands it as necessary to her very *existence*. The ministry; the Sunday School; the Parochial School; the Church's poor; the distribution of good books; the cause of Diocesan, Domestic and Foreign Missions; all, with outstretched hands, implore you to come and help them.

4. Because, if you neglect this affecting appeal, you manifestly show that, whatever you *profess*, your love to the Saviour is delusive: for "he that seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

5. Because the usual mode, of meeting all *other* claims before the Church's wants are supplied, shows that Time has, in your judgment, a preference to Eternity; the world to Christ; the perishable body to the immortal soul.

6. Because, in not contributing liberally to the Gospel's support, I am neglecting a most important means of *personal*

improvement; retaining that wheat which, if sown, would produce an abundant harvest.

7. Because the various excuses which are urged for not contributing are vain and deceptive; and the *real* reason is, that the heart is so attached to "the farm and the merchandise," that there is no room for Christ and His Church.

8. And so, notwithstanding the deep *poverty* of the Macedonians, their unsolicited liberality supplied the wants of the Christians in Judea. In this, as in other things, *quality* is more effective than quantity.

9. Because, though such excuses may deceive myself and my fellow-men, they cannot deceive Him who has made me his *steward*, and will call me to a strict account.

10. Because it is actually *discreditable* that, while industry, in any business, will secure most persons a reasonable support, nine-tenths of Christ's ministers live in great straits, and, at death, leave their families in poverty.

11. Because it is a burning shame, that the members of an Apostolic Church contributed to the support of Domestic and Foreign Missions some seventy thousand dollars for the years 1851-2, while a celebrated singer received for only one night's entertainment some ten thousand dollars, and throughout the United States, in the course of a year, some six hundred thousand dollars.

12. Because, while covetousness (the Church's sin) is denounced by God's curse, a cheerful liberality not only fulfils His command, but has its approbation not only *here* but in the solemn retributions of the *last day*.

13. Because, though my means are not ample, they are more so than those of many of my *fellow men*, and I should show my gratitude to God by giving more liberally to his Church.

14. Because, though my income were so small as to barely

meet my expenses, yet there might be, with advantage to body and soul, some retrenchment even in those expenses. The poor widow's self-denying mites filled the Church's treasury, while gifts without self-denial left it still empty.

15. Because, while we should at *all* times be temperate, yet if during Lent we all saved something from the table, from furniture, from dress, from amusements, the Church would, from such saving, cheer many drooping hearts, and cause many of her waste places "to rejoice and sing."

16. Because God's standard of contribution is not the ordinary rental of a pew, or the subscription, but that ability which God has given me, and that self-denial which I *can* practise.

17. Because the reason why persons *fall* in grace as they *rise* in worldly prosperity, is that they do not proportion their liberality to their means of usefulness.

18. Because, even in a *temporal* point of view, if I do not proportion my gifts to my means, I tempt God to proportion my means to my gifts, and thus to take away the misimproved talent.

19. Because, though what I give supplies some pressing wants of the Church, I am still giving to Christ through that want, for He himself has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

20. Because, the longer I permit my dues to be unpaid, the more difficult will such payment become, until I am tempted to give up the Church altogether.

21. Because God has solemnly promised that those "who seek His Kingdom and Righteousness *first*," shall have added all necessary temporal things; and it was the Psalmist's testimony, that "though he was old, yet had he never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread."

22. Because it should be a matter of serious inquiry,

whether the general failure of ninety-five merchants out of a hundred, does not result from the neglect of this principle of systematic liberality proportioned to their means.

23. Because the time is rapidly coming when I shall have no opportunity to be a co-worker with God, in giving my means to extend His kingdom. This world being the *appointed* place where such an opportunity is afforded.

24. Because I had better do good with my means before I die, and thus *see* their beneficial results, than wait for death which deprives me of all I have, and gives it to others whom it may injure.

25. Because, though it be said "my money is my own," it is not so; for "the silver and gold" belong to God; and a man may meet all his engagements with his fellow citizens, and yet "rob God."—*Malachi*.

26. Because, instead of murmuring at "so many calls," I should thankfully recognize them as a Providential arrangement to exercise the principle of benevolence; and instead of wishing them *fewer*, I should rejoice that the Church is so greatly extending.

27. Because, for a man to profess to be the follower of a crucified Saviour, and yet give with reluctance to that Saviour's cause, is just as absurd as to speak of warm ice or a cold sun. And such a one will discover his mistake in the next world, if not in this.

28. Because, whatever difficulties I may have in giving, yet if I adopt St. Paul's rule, and regularly lay by, weekly or monthly, as the Lord has prospered me, I shall possess a spring which, filling itself, revives the heart of the weary pilgrim.

29. Because, next to forgiving, such benevolence repays its possessor with the purest enjoyment, of which *nothing* can deprive him; Christ Himself declaring, "That it is more

blessed to give than to receive," a testimony founded on the deepest experience.

30. Because my neglecting to meet my Church dues tends to make the minister's salary still smaller, to involve him in debts discreditable to his high station, distracting to his mind, and unfitting him for that quiet which is necessary to the discharge of his duties.

31. Because, though he may say nothing, such failure to meet my obligations must have a very discouraging effect, leading him to suppose that his exertions are not appreciated by me.

32. Because it is very unjust in me to receive the *benefits* of his ministrations in health, in sickness, and at death, and yet to be careless whether he be comfortable or not.

33. Because Christ regards with special interest the treatment His ministers receive ; and though they be silent, yet will He not be so, for He has said, "He that receiveth you receiveth Me." They are *ambassadors*, and neglect of them is a slight upon that government which delegates them.

34. Because the non-payment of my dues further tends to place additional trouble on the vestry, to retard the most necessary expenses of the Church, and to impose on some one else the making up of my deficiency.

35. Because, though I do give something to the Church's support, yet if that something be only the putting a half-dime on the Sunday plate, or if it be only at the rate of three mills on a hundred dollars, I shall accomplish the Church's support about as much as he who gave ten pounds to pay Great Britain's national debt.


For the above thirty-five reasons I will regularly contribute hereafter to my Church's support ; and, though some may

neglect this complaint of "an empty Church plate," I am thankful that God yet vouchsafes me the opportunity of doing good, and I shall try to be more faithful to Him, His Church, and myself.





ORDER FOR SUNDAY SERVICE.

*Adapted to the Prayer Books published by DANA AND COMPANY, New York.
The numbers are at the foot of the page until they reach page 22.*

MORNING.	EVENING.
(See PAGE 23.)	(See PAGE 40.)
<i>Stand.</i> { Sentences of Scripture. Exhortation to Confession.	<i>Stand.</i> { Sentences of Scripture. Exhortation to Confession.
<i>Kneel.</i> { Confession of Sin, p. 25. Declaration of Absolution. Lord's Prayer, with Versicles.	<i>Kneel.</i> { Confession of Sin, p. 42. Declaration of Absolution. Lord's Prayer, with Versicles.
<i>Stand.</i> { "Glory be to," with Versicles. "Venite," with "Glory be." "Portion of Psalms for the day," p. 401 to 639, or "Selection of Psalms," p. 361 to 401. "Glory be," p. 27; or "Gloria in Excelsis," p. 29.	<i>Stand.</i> { "Glory be," with Versicles. "Portion of Psalms for the day," p. 401 to 639; or "Selection of Psalms," p. 361 to 401. "Glory be," p. 44; or "Gloria in Excelsis." p. 29.
<i>Sit.</i> { First lesson; of Old Testament, p. 10.	<i>Sit.</i> { First Lesson; of Old Testament, p. 10.
<i>Stand.</i> { Te Deum laudamus, p. 29.	<i>Stand.</i> { Cantate Domino, or Bonum est, p. 45-46.
<i>Sit.</i> { Second Lesson; of New Testament, p. 10.	<i>Sit.</i> { Second Lesson; of New Testament, p. 10.
<i>Stand.</i> { Jubilate or Benedictus, p. 33-34. "I believe," with Versicles.	<i>Sit.</i> { Second Lesson; of New Testament, p. 10.
<i>Kneel.</i> { Versicles, Collect for Peace, p. 36; for Grace, Prayer for President, Litany, p. 53.*	<i>Stand.</i> { Deus misereatur, or Benedictic, p. 46-47. "I believe," with Versicles, p. 47.
<i>Stand.</i> { Psalm in Metre.	<i>Kneel.</i> { Versicles, Collect for day, p. 72 to 294. Collect for Peace,* &c.
<i>Kneel.</i> { Communion Service, p. 295. Commandments, p. 296. Collect for day, p. 72 to 294.	<i>Stand.</i> { Psalm in Metre,
<i>Sit.</i> { Epistle, p. 72 to 294.	 Be punctual at Church, and join in responses and Amen.
<i>Stand.</i> { Gospel, p. 72 to 294.	
<i>Stand.</i> { A Hymn.	

* During Session of Congress, the occasional prayer on page 61 is added.

 For an INDEX to various offices of Church, at Catechism, Confirmation, etc., see page 8.

 To find Easter-day for each year, see upper table on page 20. And for Advent, Septuagesima Sunday, Ash-Wednesday, etc., see lower table on same page.

To derive benefit from the Public Worship of Almighty God, and to avoid disturbing the devotion of others, the following RULES should be observed in Protestant Episcopal Churches.

1. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.—*Hebrews, 10 chap. 25 verse.*
2. Be in time to implore upon your knees God's blessing on the services about to commence.
3. In case of coming late, pause for a few moments at the door, until the next change of posture.
4. Conform to the postures of standing and kneeling with the rest of the Congregation. Make *audible* responses on the proper occasions, and apply every prayer to yourself by saying "AMEN."
5. Avoid the impropriety of leaving the Church before the congregation is dismissed by the Minister.
6. Discourage conversation, reading books, turning over leaves, moving about and looking around while the Minister is officiating.
7. Take the children of the family under your *own* charge, teaching them to use the Prayer Book.
8. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have thereby entertained angels unawares.—*Heb. 13 chapter, 2 verse.*
9. Remember that the Church is public, not so much for meeting men as our God.

This is the temple of the Lord,
How dreadful is this place!
With meekness let us hear His Word,
With reverence seek His face.

10. "And further, it shall be the duty of every Minister, with such assistance as he can obtain from persons skilled in music, to give order concerning the tunes to be sung at any time in his Church; and especially, it shall be his duty to suppress all light and unseemly music, and all indecency and irreverence in its performance, by which vain and ungodly persons profane the services of the sanctuary."—*See Preface to Psalms in Metre.*
11. When the congregation is dismissed, pause a few moments to thank God for the privileges enjoyed, and ask grace that you may improve them.

OTHER RULES TO BE OBSERVED.

I. Notice of Baptism.

"When there are children to be baptized, the parents or sponsors shall give notice thereof, *before* the beginning of Morning Prayer, to the Minister." "And also Ministers shall warn the people that without great cause and necessity, they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses."

II. Catechism to be taught at home.

"The members of this Church shall instruct their families, as far as they are able, in the principles of the Christian religion, and shall cause their children to attend the catechetical instructions of their Rector; and as soon as they are sufficiently informed and impressed with the importance and sacredness of their baptismal vow, they shall present them to the Rector as candidates for confirmation; who shall examine them, and if satisfied of their fitness, recommend them to the Bishop for confirmation."—*XVII. Canon of Maryland.*

III. *The Lord's day to be hallowed.*

"All persons within this Church shall celebrate and keep the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday, in hearing the word of God read and taught, in private and public prayer, in other exercises of devotion, and in acts of charity, using all godly and sober conversation."—*Canon of General Convention.*

IV. *Communicants to have family worship.*

"It shall be the duty of every communicant in the Church, who is the head of a family, to live in the daily exercise of family worship."—*Canon XVI. of Maryland.*

V. *Theatrical and other light and vain amusements forbidden.*

"Attendance upon theatrical exhibitions, horse racing, and other vain and light amusements being considered inconsistent with the Christian character, it is hereby declared to be the duty of members of this Church carefully to abstain from encouraging them by their presence."—*Canon XVIII. of Maryland.*

VI. *Ministers to be careful in admitting to the Holy Communion.*

"No member of this Church, who has not previously communed, shall offer himself for the reception of the Lord's Supper, nor shall any Minister enroll any persons as communicants of his congregation until the Minister shall have conversed with such person or persons on the subject, or until he shall have been satisfied that they have been regular communicants in his own or some other congregation."—*XIX. Canon of Maryland.*

VII. *Excluding from the Holy Communion and Sponsorship in Baptism notorious transgressors.*

"Ministers shall be careful not to admit any person to the Holy Communion, or as Sponsors in Baptism, who are notorious transgressors; and the Vestries of vacant parishes shall endeavor to prevent such persons from being imposed on Ministers visiting such parishes."—*Canon XX. of Maryland.*

VIII. *Communicants who neglect the Lord's Supper, to be stricken from the roll.*

"Any communicant who shall neglect for six months successively, to attend the celebration of the Lord's Supper, may at the discretion of his or her Rector be stricken from the list of communicants, unless satisfactory reasons for such neglect be assigned to the Rector."—*Canon XXI. of Maryland.*

IX. *Offences for which communicants may be presented and tried.*

"Scandalous and immoral conduct, gaming, or any other vicious or corrupting amusements, a general neglect of public worship, breach of any of the Divine precepts, are offences for which communicants may be brought to trial."—*Canon XXII. of Maryland.*

X. *On the support of Ministers.*

"Whereas it is enjoined that the Minister of the Gospel 'shall live of the Gospel,' and it is the right and duty of every parishioner or member of a congregation to contribute his or her share to the support of the Ministry as God hath given ability; and, whereas it is the business of the Vestry of each parish or congregation to take care for the fulfilment of the Divine command by the diligence of the people: It shall be the duty of the Vestry of each parish or congregation to pro-

vide, by taking care for the gathering of offerings in Divine service, (except the alms at the Holy Communion,) or by the procurement and collection of subscriptions or of pew rents, by committees or otherwise, for the payment of the amount stipulated for the support of the Rector, or Minister, or Ministers, quarterly in advance. And it shall be the duty of every Rector or Minister in his annual report to the Bishop to state distinctly whether this canon shall have been obeyed; and it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Convention to report at some time before the close of each Annual Convention, and enter on the journal, a list of the names of all parishes and congregations not reported as having fulfilled this canon."—XXXI. *Canon of Maryland.*

XI. *Visitation of the sick.*

"When any person is sick, notice thereof shall be given to the Minister of the Parish."

"The Minister shall not omit earnestly to move such sick persons as are of ability to be liberal to the poor."—*Rubric.*

Also, on recovery from peril, "a thank-offering should be offered, to be applied by the Minister to relief of distress."

"Here it is to be noted that the office for the burial of the dead is not to be used for any unbaptized adults, any who die excommunicated, or any who lay violent hands on themselves."

"Every Church Warden shall have power to keep the peace and also to preserve order and decency in his respective Churches or Chapels."—*Vestry law of Maryland.*

Sunday School Rules.

1. THE TEACHERS should prepare for the class by studying the lesson given, and asking God's blessing on their exertions.
2. They should visit the absent scholars, and induce the parents to attend Church.
3. They should be regular and punctual in attendance upon School, at the stated Teachers' meeting, and at *their own* Church.
4. They should particularly see that the Church catechism be learned, and the Church service be understood, that the child can take part in the service.
5. They should not allow any conversation in the class, nor any scholar to leave his seat without permission.
1. THE PARENTS should see that the lesson given at school be learned at home.
2. They should send the child to school punctually and regularly, see that the library book be carefully returned, and by EXAMPLE encourage the child to attend public worship.
3. They should select such *week-day schools* as pay most regard to the child's religious training.
4. They should require the child to attend the catechising of the Minister, and regard all instructions imperfect that do not contemplate a due preparation for confirmation.
5. "There shall be for every male child to be baptized, when they can be had, two Godfathers and one Godmother; and for every female, one Godfather and two Godmothers; and Parents shall be admitted as sponsors if desired."
6. For duties of Sponsors, see Exhortation in the Office for Public Baptism of Infants, page 324.

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